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NOVA ET VETERA.

ROEHAMPTON:

PRINTED BY JOHN GRIFFIN.

NOVA ET VETERA:

INFORMAL MEDITATIONS.

BY

GEORGE TYRRELL, S.J.

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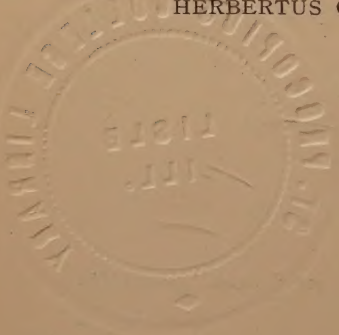

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PREFACE.

THERE is less apology needed than might perhaps appear at first sight for offering to the public a book which is hardly more than a record of private musings. Doubtless it contains little or nothing that has not been said before, and said better; yet in many cases the truths are said in the writer's own way; and so far he can claim to bring forth from his treasury old things and new—old, because truth is eternal; new, because its expression is infinitely variable. To give a new edge to truths and truisms blunted by use, it is not needful that they should be clothed in language either gorgeous or elegant; but only that their expression should be such as we are not accustomed to; such, as to make us stop and listen. Since, then, each individual has his own individual language and accentuation, it is always helpful to hear from others truths which, formulated in our own way, pass through our ears without friction and therefore escape our attention. For this reason, it does not seem altogether presumptuous or unreasonable to flood the market with meditation books, provided

the authors can claim personality of manner, and disclaim all pretence at novelty in point of matter. A new gospel is not worth listening to; while to say the old things in the old words is tiresome.

These meditations are called "informal," because the author has presented simply the substance of the thought in each case without the formalities of preludes, acts of the will, practical suggestions, colloquies, and the like, which can be easily supplied by those who are helped by method, and which others will gladly dispense with. As regards the work of the practical understanding and the will, it is plainly more in accordance with the mind of St. Ignatius Loyola that it should be the spontaneous outcome of our own reflection, rather than an explicit suggestion from without. Hence the points for meditation should rather address themselves to the receptive understanding and intellectual memory. It may well seem to some that these meditations are often abstruse and philosophical, rather than devotional; but here again it may be said that the error is on the safer side. For certain minds it often happens that the points of popular meditation books do not offer sufficient matter for the mind to lay hold of; and without some such purchase for the intellect the attention soon wanders for sheer lack of interest. Most of these thoughts are within the compass of even the least reflective,

and the few that may seem more difficult will find a key in familiarity with those that are easier.

St. Ignatius was instinctively an opponent of the theory which, on a misunderstanding of a Gospel maxim, divorces intelligence from will in the work of sanctification. "Sanctify them in Thy truth," was our Saviour's prayer for His disciples, "Thy word is truth." Holiness that rests on any other basis cannot hold out against the tempest and the flood. God's sayings kept and pondered in the heart, the utterances of reason and of revelation, of common sense and of Catholic faith, these are the daily bread and manna of the soul: "The words that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life." The wisdom which is hid from the wise and prudent and revealed to little ones, is nevertheless real wisdom; and does not leave them as it finds them in their ignorance and littleness, but gives them understanding and a quick-minded intuition as unerring as instinct. Nor is there any connection between sanctity and stupidity. Divine love is but an opening of the spiritual eyes to beauties hitherto unsuspected. As hereafter, so also even on earth, man is perfected by vision. No doubt this highest intellectual perfection is compatible with great deficiencies in the lower wisdom which wins the admiration of the world; but it is, nevertheless, the truest and only essential enlighten-

ment. A clear understanding is a great grace, for it will go more than half-way to kindle love in the will; whereas good-will without understanding is a lion let loose. If the intellect needs the control of faith, faith is perfected and served by intellect. Therefore let no man sunder what God has joined together.

As for the disorder in which these thoughts are presented, it may be said that no particular advantage was to be gained by a logical classification. Had there been any pretence at following the seasons of the Church, or at a complete treatment of ascetical theology, a little violence might have been used with improvement. But they have been recorded as they occurred from time to time, spontaneously and unsought for, in no way as parts of a whole. It would be vain to look for order where none can possibly exist; and their very disorder is more in keeping with their purpose. For in hours of dryness and weariness, we naturally turn from the monotony of method to seek relief and variety in the unexpected, as one might occasionally fly from the geometrical precision of a Dutch garden to the freedom of some pathless wilderness. Where the Latin has been quoted, the appended translation is often free and unauthorized. The same reflections and thoughts are no doubt repeated over and over again; yet always with

sufficient variety in the setting to give them another chance of striking home. Nor, as compared with other meditation books, have we much reason to fear the charge of vain repetition; though it must freely be admitted that there is one leading thought or another which runs as a strain through the whole collection, and binds them together with a unity of spirit or ethos. The spirit of devotion to the Sacred Heart, the idea of the *Benignitas et Humanitas Dei Salvatoris nostri*, is one which it is the work of the Society of Jesus to evolve into greater clearness and distinctness, purging it from all admixture of foreign elements inconsistent with its unity and purity. Prior to the Jansenist controversy, there lived side by side in the minds and writings of many holy persons principles of piety and asceticism really, though unobservedly, antagonistic to one another. It was that controversy which first called for their careful scrutiny and assortment; and showed that many of them were logically based on a misapprehension of the relation of nature to grace, and on the false supposition of an entire and fatal divorce between them. The clear expression of the mind of Catholic Christianity as to Jansenistic principles was but the signal, so to say, for the eradication of the tares. The work of their detection and severance from the wheat, lurking as they do in the most unsuspected quarters, is a delicate

and tedious operation still far from its completion. For in the other extreme, there is current outside the Church a low humanistic conception of Christ, which uses and thereby renders suspect the very words and phrases of Catholic truth. We have, therefore, to steer a difficult course. Still, much as these meditations and reflections insist on the humanness of Christ and His Church, no one will be likely to find fault with them as neglecting to give due emphasis to the Divinity of our Saviour and to the mystical aspect of Catholic Christianity.

"And how am I to use this book?" one may ask; "in what order shall I take the meditations?" In any order whatever. They only pretend to furnish raw material for thought, and in no way to prescribe method or order. Those who desire to have the preludes, colloquies, acts of the practical understanding and of the will, fixed for them, will find plenty of excellent books more suited to their needs than this, which is directed to another need. For they aim rather at guiding the stream of our thoughts and affections in an orderly way and to a definite end; whereas it is the purpose of this little book to set the stream flowing where, for one reason or another, it has run dry.

G T.

March 7, 1897.

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

THE changes in this Edition have been entirely in the way of omission and re-arrangement, and with a view to bringing the book into closer agreement with the writer's later publications.

G. T.

Richmond, Yorks, Jan. 6th, 1905.

NOVA ET VETERA.

I.

NOVA ET VETERA.

Omnis scriba doctus in regno cœlorum similis est homini patrifamilias qui profert de thesauro suo nova et vetera.

"Every scribe skilled in the Kingdom of Heaven is like to a householder who brings forth from his treasure old things." Many seem to think there is here a full stop, but there is not. So far as he brings truth from his treasure he brings forth what is old; rather, what is not new, for it is eternal, neither old or new. Yet truth may be *new* to us, though *old* in itself; as the New World was there long before Columbus found it. And even the oldest, tritest truisms, can be clothed anew according to the current fashion of the hour, so as to be hardly recognizable. He who despises either the old or the new is no *scriba doctus in regno cœlorum;* he knows but one half of that kingdom, its "conservative" aspect, or its "liberal" aspect.

"Who bringeth forth from His treasure old things and new," *i.e.*, *old* and *new* are not criteria of truth, of the treasures of Divine wisdom. A thing is not true because old, or false because new, or false because it is old, or true because it is new. Yet in the practice of controversy all these propositions are denied repeatedly.

II.

REMEMBERING CHRIST.

Jesu dulcis memoria, dans vera cordi gaudia.

"Sweet is the remembrance of Jesus, giving true joy to the heart." Love or charity is that joy which the heart derives from the contemplation of what is lovely or fair. There is no substantial difference between the beatitude of the saints on earth and in Heaven. This joy is to see God as He is—*Videbimus eum sicuti est;* a contemplation of God under the aspect of His goodness, beauty, and truth. We may truly say that charity is knowledge, the taste or appreciation of the lovableness and beauty of Christ. He is the *Summum Bonum*—"the Sovereign Excellence;" that *Pulcrum, quod visum placet*--"that Beauty whose Vision is joy." Yet not to all, but only to the little ones, does He reveal Himself. Natural wit or science cannot reveal Him. He must reveal Himself. There is the dry, barren knowledge of a violet which any soulless botanist can attain to: and there is the joy-inspiring sense of its beauty which the child or the poet

experiences. It is the lingering memory, the contemplative pondering of the beauties of the Spouse that sets the soul aglow with passionate love. Such remembrance is "sweet" to those who taste Him with a mind taught by the Holy Spirit "to relish what is right." *Gustate et videte*—"Taste and see."

Dans vera cordi gaudia—There is the false joy of pride and self-satisfaction arising from continual self-remembrance and self-contemplation,—the "fool's paradise," in which we dream our dream and hold it true; and there is a bitter sadness where there is a full sense of one's own smallness, and life's unmeaningness; and there is the true joy which springs from the remembrance of Him whose infinite fulness is the complement of our infinite emptiness; who made us nothing in ourselves that we might be everything in Him.

III.

THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST.

Sed super mel et omnia, ejus dulcis præsentia.

"But sweeter than honey, His presence." If there is sweetness in the merely imagined or remembered presence of the Beloved, much more in the Real Presence. But what is the special advantage of presence, seeing that His beauty and lovableness may absolutely be contemplated by memory as well as by sight? This seems ultimate and incapable of analysis; unless it be that beauty, like all ideals, is valued in view of realization—good to be actualized or realized; good, if only it were; and

as possible, it pleases, only with a conditional and dependent pleasure. Yet this does not touch the case where the beauty is known, not merely to be possible, but to be actual, though absent. Is it not that its actuality, which is its crown, must also be contemplated and not merely remembered or inferred; or is it that a sense of physical nearness satisfies the unitive appetite of love, which desires oneness in every possible order, and that localized beings seek local presence? *Qui amat intelligit*—"He who loves knows." Bernard never asked why; but spoke as every lover has spoken, and felt as every lover has felt, and as God the Lover of all, when He says: "My delight is to *be with* the children of men." "Father, I will that those whom Thou hast given Me should *be with Me;*" or when He was made Flesh and pitched His tent among us in the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Eucharist, and became *Emmanuel*—God *with* us; or pledged Himself to dwell in our very heart and flesh, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit: "We will come and make our abode with Him." In the contemplation, therefore, first of His beauty and goodness, then of His Real Presence, our soul finds its highest joy, and is most perfectly united to Him by charity.

IV.

THE PENITENT'S HOPE.

Jesu, spes pœnitentibus.

"Jesu, hope of the penitent"—"Friend of publicans and sinners" drawing all to Thyself; veiling Thy justice in the cloud of mercy, sent for the salvation of the lost, to call, not the just, but sinners; in no wise casting out those who come to Thee burdened and labouring; Lamb of God taking upon Thyself the sins of the world. Sinners feel no need of hope and encouragement, except so far as they are penitent, sorrowful, fearful, and downcast: to such the Baptist, that great preacher of penance, cries out: *Ecce, Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccatum mundi*—"Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world."

V.

CHRIST AND THE SUPPLIANT.

Quam pius es petentibus.

"How pitiful to those that pray." "More willing to hear than we to pray, and wont to give more than either we ask or deserve;" pitiful to all who ask, even when because they ask unseasonably or ask amiss, He denies their request. Pitiful, when He seems silent and austere and suffers us to clamour after Him in vain, that we asking more largely, He may give more liberally. Pitiful, when in our folly we ask, not for the Bread of Life, or

the Fish, but for a stone or a scorpion. Pitiful, when He refuses to promise us an unearned seat in His Kingdom; but pledges us instead a share in His chalice and in His baptism of blood. Pitiful, as He would have us be, when He says, "Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away." "Freely ye have received, freely give," "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over."

VI.

THE TREASURE SOUGHT.

Quam bonus te quærentibus.

"How good to those who look for Thee." Many seek His gifts and graces; few seek Himself, the Grace of graces. "What reward wilt thou have?" He asks of Aquinas. "None, but Thyself, Lord." *Dilectus meus mihi et ego illi*—"My beloved is mine and I am His." He has promised that none shall seek vainly Him who came to seek and to save them. *Quærite et invenietis*—"Seek and ye shall find." But how? "If *with all your hearts* you seek Me, ye shall surely find Me;" *i.e.*, if we seek Him as the necessary and all-sufficient Good; or as the Magi sought Him, not for their own sakes, but for His; not to get, but to give; not to be honoured by Him, but to adore Him. *Quam bonus!* How good to the half-fearful disciples who followed Him shyly, when He turned round to encourage them: "What seek ye?" "Master," they say, "where dwellest Thou?" It was He they sought. *Venite et videte*—

"Come and see;" and they abode with Him that day. How good to her who sought His Sacred Body in the early morning before it was yet day, for "they that seek Him early shall find Him." "Woman, why weepest thou, whom seekest thou?" "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." "Maria!" "Rabboni." *Quam bonus te quærentibus.*

VII.

THE TREASURE FOUND.

Sed quid invenientibus?

"But what art Thou to those that find?" *Inveni, quem diligit anima mea, tenebo nec dimittam* —"I have found Him whom my soul loveth, I will hold Him and will not let Him go." *Qui invenit me, invenit vitam*—"He that findeth Me, findeth life." This is that treasure hid in the field which when a man hath found, *præ gaudio illius, vadit et vendit omnia*—"for joy thereof he goeth and selleth all." It is hid to all eyes—*oculus non vidit*—"for eye hath not seen it"—save to those which God has opened: *Aperi oculos meos et considerabo mirabilia de lege tua*—"Open my eyes and I shall see the wonders of Thy law." For our eyes are holden so that we are blind to our treasure when it is often close to our hand. We walk with Him in the way, and converse with Him, and gaze in His face, and all the while believe Him far away. We seek the living among the dead.

VIII

CHRIST'S VISITS.

Quando cor nostrum visitas,
Tunc lucet ei veritas,
Mundi vilescit vanitas,
Et intus fervet caritas.

"When Thou dost visit our hearts." Christ, "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls," makes His periodic visitation of our hearts in times of light and consolation. It is not always visitation-time, yet the effects of each visitation are to carry us on to the next. So Ignatius bids us remember that we may not waste such precious moments basking in the sunshine which is given us, not for present enjoyment, but for future use. As of old, God from time to time, "visited His people" through His prophets, so He comes to our soul from time to time. 2. *Tunc lucet ei veritas*—"Then Thy truth shines therein." This is the first effect of His visitation. *Scrutabitur Jerusalem lucernis, illuminabit abscondita tenebrarum, et revelabit consilia cordium*—"He will search out Jerusalem with torches, and bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will reveal the secrets of hearts." He lightens the darkest corners of our heart; shows us our most secret motives; holds up to us a truthful mirror from which we cannot turn our gaze—humiliating though the contemplation be. For we need now and then to be disillusioned about ourselves, to be purged from the poison of self-contentment by the bitter hyssop of self-knowledge. 3. *Mundi vilescit vanitas*—

"The empty world grows contemptible." This is the second effect of Divine visitation. In the dim light many a shadow seems real and substantial; a painted Jezebel looks young and fair. But daylight discloses the hollowness and unreality of such beliefs. Living in the world, we cannot so withstand the effect of universal example as not gradually to become more impressed with its importance; less alive to the unseen, true, and only realities. The same inward light that shows us ourself, shows us the world as it is, not as it seems. 4. *Et intus fervet caritas*—"And love glows within." For all would be to no end did it not also show us the King in His beauty and lovableness. Indeed, He, so seen, is the light in which self and the world are revealed in their ghastly nothingness. It would be a desolating and bitter knowledge did it stop short of this, which sweetens and consoles.

IX.

THE SOUL, AS A VINE.

Repleti fructu justitiæ.

"Being filled with the fruits of justice which are through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."[1] The fruits of justice are "love, joy, peace," &c. They are the outcome of grace or justice turned to good account, not stopping short with the foliage of good words and pious conversation—"Though I speak with tongues of angels and have not charity," &c.; "Let us not love in word or in tongue

[1] Philipp. i.

[only], but in deed." Nor again, stopping short at the blossom of good desires and velleities, which are, so to say, good works in promise, or in the bud. "Through Jesus Christ." He is the gardener of the Householder who has taken my soul as a wild vine and set it in the richest soil and sunniest corner of His vineyard, and watered it with the dews of actual graces from above, and from below with the streams of living water beside which it is planted; and has digged round the roots by sorrows and humiliations designed to soften and loosen the affections; and has pruned and trained the branches *in lateribus domus suæ*—"over the walls of his house," "to the praise and glory of God," *i.e.*, of the Householder and Lord of the vineyard; that He may glory in this tree which by its fertility does credit to Him and His care; that He may not be disgraced by it and say, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?"

X.

FAITH AND PRACTICE.

Qui autem facit veritatem venit ad lucem.

Faith, in those who have faith, does not vary directly with evidence, but, as Aquinas teaches,[1] according to the Divine *lumen fidei* whereby the believableness stands out more brightly and clearly to one than to another. Even in the natural order, given equal knowledge of the proximate future, one man's foresight is clearer, stronger, more efficacious than another's. Children and savages are little

[1] *C. Gent.* iii. 38.

affected by what they know mentally; but much, by what they see or imagine vividly, *i.e.*, they fall short of human strength and dignity in this respect. In an age and country of faith the imagination is much helped by externals and by the publicity of religion, which is sensibly felt on all sides. Even when practice is dropped, faith will remain in an individual so environed; for it is not tempted by opposition, but is supported by the imagination, and costs nothing. But here and now it is all otherwise, and faith does not long survive charity. Even for ourselves the impossibility of picturing the other world when once we find that our childish imaginings were but symbolic, makes it very unreal and so far ineffectual as a stimulus to action. But in proportion as we act up to our knowledge it becomes real to us. We therefore embody it in conduct, as a secret cause is bodied in its manifest effect. This principle is at the root of the power exerted on us and on our faith by the lives and examples of believers.

XI.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

Erat Lux Vera quæ illuminat omnem hominem.

"He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not" may be well applied to the world of intellect and knowledge, which is the highest creation of the True Light. He is in that world creating and causing all that there is in it of light and truth; and yet when He comes to it from without as a Teacher, and as the Truth

taught, it receives Him not: *Hic est heres*, it says, *venite occidamus eum et hereditas erit nostra*—"Here is the Heir: let us slay Him, and the heritage will be our own." Men want to have their reason for their own heritage; they will not have this Man to reign over them.

XII.

HELP FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

Levavi oculos meos in montes unde veniet auxilium.

"I have raised up my eyes to the mountains whence cometh my help"—(1) to the Mount of the Beatitudes for light in the midst of darkness, from Him who is the Way and the Truth, whose "word is a light to my feet and a lamp to my path;" (2) to the Mount of Thabor, for hope in discouragement; hope in the "glory that is to be revealed" beside which the sufferings before me are light, momentary, and not worthy to be considered; for if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign—"it is good for us to be here;" (3) to the Mount of Olives, in temptation, to the High Priest "touched with feeling for our infirmities," "tempted in all as we are," "tasting the weakness of the flesh," and overcoming it by the willingness of the spirit "resisting even unto blood" in His agony and conflict; (4) to Mount Calvary for pardon and forgiveness when I have fallen; or when in terror for the sinful past, to the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world; (5) to the Mystical Mount *Zion* whither He has ascended to the right hand of God to plead His wounds for me "ever living to make intercession,"

and to shower down in torrents upon the thirsty earth the living water that springs from the five "wells of the Saviour."

XIII.

DIVINE WATCHFULNESS.

Non det in commotionem pedem tuum.

"He will not suffer thy foot to slip;" for we are walking, as it were, in dim light over a raging river on stepping-stones; or picking our steps from tussock to tussock, through a treacherous quagmire. And which of us can be ever so continuously watchful over every step as to escape destruction? There are times when we look back on past hair-breadth escapes, and the seeming chancefulness of our safety; and feel that perseverance for a day, let alone for a lifetime, is impossible. Then, we must remember that there is another watching our footsteps more anxiously than ourselves, of whom it is said: "He that is thy guardian will not slumber:" *i.e.*, will not for a moment blink, or take His eyes off us: though we should take our eyes off Him, and "slumber and sleep" and forget Him, through fault or through frailty. It is not enough to remember the presence of God if we forget that it is the presence of One whose attention and observation is concentrated on us, *scrutans renes et corda*—"searching our inmost heart." He is the Watchman who by night watches the Israel of our soul. "Unless the Lord keep the

city, the watchman watcheth in vain." He is the nurse and faithful spouse of the soul who sits with us through the long night of our delirium, when others lie dreaming and heedless. He is the Father who watches the footsteps of the wandering prodigal and sees him when yet a long way off. He it is who seems to slumber within us when the frail vessel of our soul is storm-tossed and water-logged, but whom in their fury, no less than in their calm, the winds and seas obey. "Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

XIV.

MAGNIFICAT.

Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.

"For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me Blessed: for He that is mighty hath done great things for me." Mary's humility is not blind to her great gifts, *Fecit mihi magna*—"He hath done great things for me;" and *beatam me dicent*—"men shall call me Blessed." But they were God's doing and the fruits of His blessing.

She lifts her eyes and looks into future ages and sees every altar, shrine, picture, well; every church and sanctuary where she, the little maid of Nazareth, shall be set up and worshipped and loved, blessed among women, blessed of all times and nations. She hears Gabriel's *Ave* re-echoed a million times daily, age after age, "to the last syllable of recorded time;" and then on, into eternity, when the *ora pro nobis* shall have been forgotten together with the remembrance of sin and sorrow, and the troubled dream of mortal life; and when saints and angels will mingle *Ave, gratia plena* with the harmony of their unending *Tersanctus*. And she hears *Salve Regina* and *Ave maris stella*, *Regina Cœli* and the Litany of Loreto, and Bernard's *Memorare*, and the undying rhythm of the Holy Rosary, the fifteen Mysteries, and the Seven Sorrows—all this she sees and hears when, inspired by the Holy Ghost, she cries: "Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me Blessed"—Blessed, not as the primal

source, but as the recipient of blessings—"for He that is mighty hath done great things for me and Holy is His Name."

XV.

EXAMPLE OF THE SAINTS.

Spiritus quidem promptus est, caro autem infirma.

(Collect for St. Callistus.) 1. "O God, who seest how through weakness we fall away." Apart from our sins of malice, our infirmities tend continually to weaken charity and separate us from God. *Spiritus promptus, caro infirma*—"The spirit is ready, but the flesh weak." There is nothing sustained in our love, which now and then flames up and forthwith begins to dwindle. Repeated experience of this tends to discourage us by a conviction of our own fickleness. But if *we* know it, God knows and sees it too, "who remembers that we are but dust;" "all flesh is grass, and its glory," its fervour, its aspirations, "are as the flowers of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth."

2. "Mercifully restore us to our love of Thee." "*If we confess* our sins," if we frankly acknowledge our fault, He will have mercy, and restore us not only to our former love, but to a greater. For by such relapses and renewals we progress like the incoming tide. Our hearts are in God's hand; He alone can make us sorrow for coldness and wish for restoration; and this very wish is an earnest that He is ready to fulfil it if we do not resist. 3. "By

the example of Thy saints." God uses the ministry of creatures for our conversion, which thereby become graces and sacraments in His hands. The love of a Paul, an Augustine, a Bernard, a Francis, may be, through His grace, the means to rouse us to wonder what it was they saw that we do not see; to long to enter into their peace and serene joy. For this is even natural, as when we see one rapt in the reading of a book whose meaning is to us incomprehensible; or at least uninteresting. *Converte nos Deus Salutaris noster et averte iram tuam a nobis*—"Convert us, O God our Saviour, and turn away Thy anger from us."

XVI.

GOD IN MAN.

Diliges proximum tuum sicut teipsum.

If our direct end and happiness is to get to love God, and to unlove all that is distasteful to Him; the love of our neighbour is but the same thing viewed on another facet. If *amare et amari*—"to love and to be loved"—expresses the deepest yearning of the human soul, nothing should conduce more to our joy in life than this truest charity. "As thyself" is no equation, but an identity; God does not here implicitly bid us to love ourselves first, and then our neighbour equally, but He says: "Die to thyself, forget thyself, and let thy neighbour take the place of self; not considering our own things, but the things of others." Identified with others, we shall "rejoice with them that rejoice and weep with

them that weep," as He did who came to minister to others and to give His Life as a ransom for many. This is to "put on Christ;" to sanctify ourselves; to "praise, reverence, and serve God" in our neighbour, and "by so doing to save our souls." Nor does such charity grow without laborious exercise. We must begin by services rendered from a sense of duty and with no sweetness. Then, since all love what they labour for—even as God loves the troublesome souls, or mothers their crippled children, or scapegrace, thankless sons—love will waken in our heart; and habit will make easy and pleasant the movements which were stiff and jarring while the rust of self lay thick on our affections. Such charity means the extirpation of all carnal and sensual and worldly love from the soul; and the less we distinguish it from the love of Christ our Saviour, the better. When we look on our crucifix we should see through and beyond to the wounds of Christ's Mystical Body; and when we look on human suffering, sorrow, weakness, we should see therein Christ crucified.

XVII.

GOD'S BOUNTY.

Oculi omnium in te sperant Domine.

"The eyes of all look to Thee, O Lord," like the anxious eyes of a dog waiting to be fed by the scraps from his master's table; yet not presuming to snatch. 2.*Et tu das escam illorum in tempore opportuno*—"And Thou feedest them at the right time," for the dog does not know the *tempus opportunum*—"the opportune moment," as his master does, but is continually on the strain not to miss it when it arrives. So we should abide God's own good time, who gives us the hunger no less than the food. *Si tardaverit expecta eum*—"If He tarry, wait for Him." 3.*Aperis tu manum tuam*—"Thou openest Thy hand." God's open-handedness towards us contrasts with our close-fistedness towards Him and His. "He *fills*," to overflowing, "the hungry with good things;" "good measure pressed down running over." He fills *every* living thing with abundance; much more those that live the life of grace, with the Bread of Life.

XVIII.

THE PROOF OF GOD'S WORD.

Ignitum eloquium tuum vehementer.

"Thy word is tried exceedingly as in the fire." The true doctrine of life is that which will "console

us in our lowness"—*Hæc me consolata est in humilitate mea;* which will go with us "through fire and water and lead us to refreshment." Where is the philosophy, outside that of the Man of Sorrow, which has "good news for the poor," the maimed, the halt, and the blind. *Hæc me consolata est in humilitate mea;* and, "therefore, Thy servant loveth it."

XIX.

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF CHRIST.

Ecce totus mundus post eum abit.

"Lo, the whole world is going after Him," which is true, not of all men, but "of all sorts and conditions of men;" old and young, male and female, Jew and Greek, ancient and modern, &c.; every form and variety of humanity finds its aspirations and ideals realized in Him who is "the Man"—*par excellence.* None other has ever been so "run after:" *Speciosus forma præ filiis hominum*—"Fair to behold, beyond the sons of men;" albeit those who run, are weighted with the cross before they can follow Him. And that other greater world which runs not, stands amazed, and says: "Lo, the whole world is gone after Him!" for "darkness has blinded their eyes" to the "King in His beauty." *Non est species ei,* they say, *neque decor, et vidimus eum et non erat aspectus* —"He has no beauty nor comeliness. We have seen Him, and see nothing to desire about Him." "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things and need not that any man

should teach you." He has anointed our eyes that we may "see Him as He is," and healed our fevered palate to "taste and see." His Name is as fragrant spikenard poured out, whose odour fills the whole world. *Trahe me post te, in odorem curremus unguentorum tuorum*—"Draw me after Thee, that I may run in the wake of Thy unguents."

XX.

GIVING TO THE POOR.

Abiit tristis.

"He went away sorrowful." It is as making us selfish and indifferent to those who have not, that possessions are an impediment to salvation. Hence it is not enough to sell all, unless we give all to the poor, and follow Him who is the Friend and Servant of the poor; so that having given them our possessions we should then give them ourselves. *Non quæro donum tuum*, they say to us by the mouth of the Poor Man, *sed te*—"I seek not your gifts, but yourself." How hard for those who have riches, talents, influence, friends, precious boxes of spikenard, to enter in the Kingdom of Heaven. The news that all these gifts are not for themselves but for others, sends them away sad; and sadder as their possessions are greater. Blessed is He of whom it is written: *dispersit, dedit pauperibus*—"He hath scattered His gifts to the poor," and blessed are those who rise up, leave all, and follow Him; and make a great banquet for Him and for His friends, the publicans and sinners.

XXI.

ST. ANDREW.

O Bona Crux! quæ decorem ex membris Domini suscepisti.

"O good Cross, which hast won beauty from the touch of God's limbs." As the garments and belongings of the saints become relics worthy of veneration, so all that Christ used, or even touched, became full of quasi-sacramental virtue: poverty, labour, sorrow, and shame, or in one word, the cross—*Quæ decorem ex membris Domini suscepisti! Electa digno stipite, tam sancta membra tangere.* We forget that the cross was to the ears of Jew and Greek what the gallows is to ours, a word of infamous association. How lovable then must He be whose love could make so lovable, a thought so unlovely; Who could make St. Andrew cry out: "O cross, long desired, tenderly loved, ceaselessly sought, and at last made ready for my thirsting soul." "Take me from among men, and restore me to my Master." Such is the aspect of death to the saints. *Mori lucrum*—"Death is gain." It is true also of that death, "precious in the sight of the Lord," by which the saints die daily, which lifts them up above earth, nearer to Heaven; takes their erring heart from all base affection, and restores it to its Master who made it for Himself. Each cross or sorrow is a step in Jacob's ladder. And yet when so lifted up they draw all men to themselves, and thereby to Christ; and being themselves nearer to God, they

are truer mediators between God and man. It was the tasting of death and sorrow that made Christ a compassionate and sympathetic High Priest. "May He through Thee receive me, who through Thee redeemed me." Through His Cross alone, and in union with it, do our crosses save us,—all making one mystical body of suffering, whereof Christ's suffering is the head, and our sufferings the members; just as there is a mystical body of prayer and of praise and of grace and of glory, whose head and plenitude is hidden with Christ in God; whose members and branches are still growing day by day towards the fulness of perfection predestined from eternity, "Filling up in our body what is wanting."

Peter and Andrew, the two first called, were both crucified. *Hæc est vera fraternitas*—"This indeed is the real brotherhood," for the true sheep of Christ are branded with the sign of the Cross, symbolized by the cross in Baptism, traced *tam in fronte, quam in corde,* on the brow, that we may glory in the shame: on the heart, for it is not suffering, but sufferings *loved* and borne for His sake that mark us His.

XXII.

NIGHT AND DAY.

Nox præcessit; dies autem appropinquavit.

"The night is past, the day is at hand, let us cast away the works of darkness and put on the armour of light." Night, the time of dreams and unrealities, when we are alone and unobserved of men; a time of preparation for the day when light shows us

surrounding realities, which before were veiled, and brings us into the converse of men and under their observation. "The things which appear are but temporal," but the hidden realities, which underlie appearances, are eternal. The only solid utility of life's dream, is as a preparation for the *dies Domini*—"the day of the Lord," which is to bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and to render to every man according to his works; and "in the brightness of His coming," to dispel all the doubts and darknesses which make human life so full of sadness and mystery. "While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept." No healthy subject, none but a somnambulist would go abroad in the day in night-clothes. We are therefore to get ready to rise from sleep, to cast aside the works of darkness as a night-garment, and to clothe ourselves as those who "walk in the light even as He is in the light." Our works cover our natural nakedness and characterize us. In them and under them are we seen. All dreams, illusions, ambitions, attachments, which tie us to this unreal life, which make us believe in it, or which arise from our belief in it, are works of darkness. *Surge qui dormis*—"Rise, sleeper," lest the day come upon you suddenly, "as the lightning that shines from east to west," "as a thief in the night." "But put ye on the Lord Christ," for this is the "armour of light," the garment of those who walk as in the day. "Put ye on," *i.e.*, be so united with Him, transformed into Him, that He may own us to be His, and may not be ashamed of our nakedness

"before the angels of God." "Put ye on," not a "putting on," or pretence, or material following, but that true "imitation of Christ," which grows from an inward personal love of Him, and sympathy with His ideas and tastes.

XXIII.

CHRIST, OUR SERVANT.

Filius hominis non venit ministrari, sed ministrare.

"The Son of Man came not to be served," yet Mary and Joseph served Him; and the devout women, and Martha, and Nicodemus, and others. Yet it was not for this, *as for an end*, that He came, "Lord and Master" though He was. It is no man's vocation to be served; and if we are served, it is to free us, not for our own leisure, but for a fuller service of others. He came "to serve;" to kneel and wash the feet of sinful man, to be "an eye to the blind, a foot to the lame," to be a physician, a guide, a shepherd; and when He had given His labour and all else, at last "to give His Life a ransom for many." If it is great love to die in the service of another, it is far greater directly to give one's life for the life of another. *Ecce quomodo dilexit*—"Behold how He loved us."

XXIV.

THE HOLY NAME.

Nil canitur suavius
Auditur nil jucundius
Nil cogitatur dulcius
Quam Jesus, Dei Filius.

"No smoother song." No rhythm runs more easily or sweetly; no melody more simply; no voice so rude or feeble, but finds it within its compass, without strain or effort. *In ore mel mirificum*—"A wondrous honey to the lips," says Bernard, echoing David's *Quam dulcia faucibus meis eloquia tua, super mel ori meo*—"How sweet Thy words to my mouth, more than honey to the taste." From the abundance of a loving heart the mouth of the lover speaks of the beloved, naturally, easily, in season, unaggressively, as do the saints; nothing forced, or stilted, or violent, or tasteless.

"Nought more gladly heard." To hear of Him gladdens us; it is not a theme which wearies or palls. For when our affection is fixed on another, we lead others to speak of him by a thousand subtle little artifices. *In aure dulce canticum*—"A sweet strain for the ear." Like some sweet, familiar song laden with the purest and best associations, which we ask to hear again and again. Yet it may be that, through the bad taste of the singer, we would rather miss the melody altogether than hear it ill-handled and profaned.

"No sweeter thought." — *Jesu dulcedo cordium.* It is the thought that banishes all bitterness, and

uproots every *radix amaritudinis;* the cure for pessimism and cynicism with regard to ourselves and others, which makes us think gently, wisely, and, what comes to the same after all, *justly* of human nature, with its rents and wounds and weaknesses; with its wonderful "obediential" capacities to be raised from nothing to everything; from the mire of bestial degradation "to the right hand of the Majesty on high" crowned with glory and honour, "all things being put in subjection under its feet." The lower, the meaner, the more revolting, seem the depths to which humanity may and does sink; the better we appreciate the genuflection at the *Homo factus est.*

XXV.

THE HOLY RELICS.

Si quis mihi ministraverit honorificabit eum Pater meus

The Holy Relics speak to us of the honour which God Himself pays to His saints: *Gloria hæc est omnibus sanctis ejus*—"This is the honour due to all His saints;" and: "If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour, and We will come and make Our abode with him." The power of God's spirit seems to linger and brood over every fragment or relic of those whose death was "precious in the eyes of the Lord," every hair of whose head was named and numbered. Again, these relics speak to us of the future resurrection and glorification of those bodies which were the shrines of

grace, and of whose archetype it is said: "Thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption," and therefore they remind us of the sacramental sanctity of Christian flesh and blood, never to be violated by any blot of unchastity under pain of sacrilege against the temple of the Holy Spirit. Lastly, they speak to us of the power of Christ which is to raise us from the dead, and to spiritualize our mortal clay, changing the body of our humiliation into the fashion of His glorious Body by that power whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. For to Him, as man, all power in Heaven and earth, over spirit and matter, is given, by whom, as God, "all things were made," in whom God in the beginning created Heaven and earth. As the winds and seas obey Him, so every power of nature; even the strongest, the most dreaded, the most inevitable law of decay, destruction, and death. "When He shall have put all things under His feet," every rebel force, physical, spiritual, or moral, then "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." *O mors ubi victoria tua? O mors ubi stimulus tuus?*—"O death, where is thy sting?" Through Christ its sting of reproach and shame has been taken away, since dying He has sanctified death, and ensured its final overthrow. *Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur*—"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

XXVI.

THE SENSE OF SIN.

De profundis clamavi.

"From the depths have I cried." Heaven and Hell, *i.e.*—Holiness, which raises us above the world and above ourselves, and Sin, which pulls us down and ties us to earth—are opposed as height and depth. *Tu solus sanctus, tu solus altissimus*—"Thou only art holy, Thou only art most high." Here David, out from the depths of his sinfulness, from beneath the "floods and billows that have gone over him," cries up, as to one too far removed to hear with the ears of justice, yet trusting that mercy will be less hard of hearing. "Let Thy ears be attentive," as though it would need some strain to catch so feeble and distant a sound. "Attentive" as their ears who listen with bated breath for a sign from one buried in some mine or cavern whom they seek to rescue. This sense of our own lowness and distance from God makes our voice carry more surely than if we deemed ourselves within easy talking distance.

XXVII.

FEAR OF GOD'S SCRUTINY.

Si iniquitates observaveris Domine, Domine quis sustinebit.

"If Thou, Lord, wilt search out faults, who can ever be saved?" "Take this white robe," says the Church to us at our Baptism, "and see that thou carry it spotless before the tribunal of Christ." And yet after all she has done for us—

even for the very best of us—after all her teaching, guidance, instruction; after absolutions, and blessings, and Eucharists, and anointings; the most she can say of us at the end, when the priest turns away from our grave with the final *De profundis*, is: *Si iniquitates observaveris Domine, Domine quis sustinebit.* It is only through God's uncovenanted mercies that there is hope for us at all. "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord," no, not even on the expressed terms of the New Covenant of mercy, "for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." A microscope with a strong light will reveal roughnesses and rottennesses where weaker vision sees all smooth and sound. We may well distrust even our seeming innocence and wonder anxiously how our purest actions will appear in the brilliant white light of God's presence: *Dies Domini revelabit*—"God's day will disclose it." *In manibus tuis sortes meæ;* God meantime holds our lots hidden in His own hand. Were they in the hands of blind chance we might tremble, but in God's hands they are safer than in our own.

"Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," the hands that made me and fashioned me; that have sustained and borne me up; that were nailed to the cross for me; that have touched me and healed me; in which my name is graven never to be obliterated, even were I to be lost for ever.

XXVIII.

HOPE, NOT PRESUMPTION.

Qui Mariam absolvisti
Et latronem exaudisti
Mihi quoque spem dedisti.

Qui Mariam absolvisti—"Thou who didst pardon Mary." While we derive hope from the freeness and fulness of Mary's pardon; the rich and abundant graces showered upon her; the height of contemplative love to which she was raised from out of the mire of sensuality; still we must not forget the intensity of her sorrow; the profusion of her tears; the depth of her humility; the sincerity and finality of her conversion. We must also remember that her sins were sins of frailty, not of malice, or unmercifulness, or selfishness. Else perhaps she may be an occasion to us of presumption rather than of hope. *Et latronem exaudisti*—"And didst listen to the thief." Here too there was a free and instantaneous pardon of one whose whole life, probably, was passed in sin or forgetfulness of God. *Hodie: mecum*—"To-day: with Me." But then, what humility! *Nos digna factis recipimus*—"We receive the due of our deeds." What fear! *Nonne et tu times Deum?*—"Dost not thou fear God?" What faith! *Domine, . . . in regnum tuum*—"Lord, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." What confidence! *Memento mei*—"Remember me." How many get the grace of dying on the cross beside our Saviour? Here again there is ground for reasonable hope, but not for presumption or deferring repentance till death. Is there any instance on record of one being saved who *trusted* to a death-bed repentance? *Mihi quoque spem dedisti*

—"To me also Thou accordest a hope." If my faith, humility, fear, love, contrition, is so far behind theirs, what hope can I draw from their case? This —that these graces and the grace of repentance is itself from God, and not refused to those that ask it. For to wish for it, and ask for it, is from God, who thereby shows Himself willing to finish what He has begun. "He that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out," and "no man comes to Me except the Father draw him."

XXIX.

A LILY MID THORNS.

Sicut lilium inter spinas sic amica mea inter filias.

"As a lily mid thorns, so my darling among the daughters of men." Mary's soul is a lily from the spotlessness of its purity, the fragrance of its charity, the grace and delicacy of its form. A lily hedged round with thorns, cruel and unsightly. For love of this lily the Son of God has entangled Himself amidst the thorns, mingling with "the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword," that at length, rent and bleeding, He might grasp for Himself, if no other, at least this one full fruit of His Incarnation and Passion. And this in a measure is true of each single soul which by purity and charity, fair and fragrant, bears some distant semblance to the Immaculate, and may, through and with her, be culled and gathered into one bouquet of passion-flowers. It has been sought through thorns and briers, at the cost of piercing pain and copious blood-shedding. And further, if we regard the virtue of loving purity and pure love, as a lily which we ourselves should covet and apprehend, let us be sure that it can be

reached only by those who will struggle forward to it through the thorns of difficulty, perplexity, and painful mortification: who grasp it with bleeding hands. And those who would preserve it when grasped, must hedge themselves round with thorns, with safeguards and precautions, with the thousand little weapons which, weak in themselves but strong in their multitude, keep the world, the flesh, and the devil at a safe distance.

XXX.

SOWING IN TEARS.

Qui seminant in lacrymis, in exultatione metent.

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." The Son of Man is the Sower who, at His Incarnation and Nativity, went forth to sow the seed of the Word of God. And He sowed in tears, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. But at the end of the world He will send forth His angels to gather His elect from the four quarters of the earth, to reap and bind in sheaves the fruit of His tears; and then He will return Home in joy and triumph, "bearing the sheaves in His bosom"—*veniens veniet cum exultatione portans manipulos in sinu suo.* In whatever work we do for God, whether our own sanctification or that of our neighbour, this law holds true. We sow in tears, in weakness, in discouragement, in pain, in adversity; and what our tears might water in vain for ever, God in His own good season, often when hope is at its last gasp, fertilizes, blesses, fructifies with abundant and joyful increase.

Thus what Blessed Monica sowed mid the rain of her tears, she reaped in the sunshine of great joy. The wounded, lifeless Body which Mary laid in the ground and watered with her tears, she received, glorified, into her bosom with the joy of Easter. The dead in Christ whom we have sown in tears, we shall reap in joy. He who has left father or mother, or lover, for Christ's sake, albeit with tears, shall receive an hundred-fold in this world and in the world to come life everlasting.

XXXI.

OVERRULING PROVIDENCE.

Ipsa me deduxerunt et adduxerunt.

"Send forth Thy light and truth; it is they that have led me and brought me to Thy Holy Mount and to Thy Tabernacle." It is they, and not I myself. Whether in the external history of my career, or the internal history of my spiritual training, I can do nothing, have done nothing but stand in my own light. It is almost in spite of myself that I find myself where I am, and what I am, such as I am. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;" for we have no power of self-guidance, *errantes et vexati*—"wandering and harassed." As one who drives sheep through the crowded mazes of a city must run before them and block this way and that; and almost force and frighten them into the right path; so does the "Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" deal with our waywardness. We can look

back on the past and see how design has ruled everywhere: even when we felt most independent, most self-determining, we were but as clay in the hands of the potter.

XXXII

GOD WORKS QUIETLY.

Post ignem, sibilus auræ tenuis.

"God was not in the rushing wind," not in those reformers who force their way on by violence, sweeping all before them by the impetus of their self-will, uprooting rocks in their onward rush. Such winds may be His messengers of wrath, by permission rather than by mission—at least, so far as they have slipped the guiding rein, and carry on for self, what was begun for God. And "God was not in the earthquake," in those radicals who are so keen to see the rottennesses of the present system; so blind to its strength; who are zealous to pull down the old fabric before they have so much as planned the new; who trust in logic and legislation rather than in affection and discipline: men who love the excitement of cataclysms, the thrill of a social upheaval, the shock of city crashing to the ground. And "God was not in the fire," in the heat of violent anger and animosity, "breathing forth threatenings and slaughter;" in the controversial spirit of personal rancour and fierce indignation. *Ira interdum movemur et zelum putamus*—"Often we are stirred by anger and call it zeal." But at last there came *sibilus auræ tenuis*—"the whisper of a

gentle breeze;" and God was there; whose whispering grace is so weak to all seeming, so easily resisted and turned aside, so quickly outclamoured and drowned by the tumult of passion; and yet so powerful and subtle in its influence, winding its way quietly round every obstacle; using every little chink and crevice as a door to the ear of our heart; stealing in among us "in our midst when we know Him not;" known to us only when perhaps He has vanished, and we remember "how our hearts burned within us while He yet spake with us on the way." We must do His work in His own way, whether it regard ourselves or others; not rushing forward blindly to our goal; nor shaking the foundations into ruin ere we have planned the new structure; nor heating our soul with fierce, blinding indignation against ourself or others; for God is not in the hurricane; not in the earthquake; not in the fire; but in the whisper of the gentle breeze.

XXXIII.

FAITH, FIRE-TRIED.

Suadeo tibi emere a me aurum ignitum, probatum.

"I urge thee to buy of Me gold, fire-tried and approved." Those vendors who force their wares on us are usually self-interested, looking to their own profit. God persuades us to buy, solely out of love for us; for He longs to give, yet will not give *gratis* or unasked. Hence He persuades us, He makes us want His wares and ask for them. "He is more willing to give, than we to pray," and His

first gift is to make us willing to pray. How does He persuade the Laodiceans? By rebuking them lovingly, *quos amo arguo et castigo*—"Whom I love I rebuke and chasten;" by showing them their state of delusion, in which, being poor, blind, and naked, they fancy themselves rich, and clear-sighted, and clad. *Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me ut discam justificationes tuas*—"It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me that I might learn thy justifications." And what is the *Aurum ignitum*, this gold tried and approved by fire? Faith, in its widest sense; the faith that has been through the fire of temptations and come out pure and purged of its dross. We are, then, to pray not merely for faith, but for the persecutions and temptations by which faith is purified; nay, we are to purchase this tried faith as the reward of merits and good works. Such a faith is God's richest gift. "Lord, increase our faith."

XXXIV.

THE NATURE OF SIN.

Quoniam iniquitatem meam ego cognosco; et peccatum meum contra me est semper. Tibi soli peccavi et malum coram te feci.

"For I acknowledge my iniquity." We are willing enough to acknowledge our weakness, but not so willing to acknowledge our wilfulness. "The serpent beguiled me," we say, or "The woman whom Thou gavest me." God knows every excuse and allows for it; so that we need never excuse ourselves before the all-knowing and all-just. It is our faults we must acknowledge, not our frailties.

Peccavi nimis mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa, i.e., I did wrong and did it wilfully and inexcusably. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins." It is not as a declaration or publication that sacramental confession is necessary for forgiveness; but as an acknowledgment of guilt. It is impossible to forgive one, in the strict sense of the term, who excuses himself for the injury he has done us; or who does not acknowledge, at least inwardly, that he is inexcusable.

Peccatum meum contra me est semper—"My sin is always before me," *i.e.*, he is haunted and dominated by the thought of his sin. *Cœpit flere;* he has entered on a life of weeping and penance. This *peccavi* colours every action, and gives it a reparative value. If our sins are always before us, God "will cast them behind His back;" if we continually remember them, God will forget them: "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." If we remember our debts, we shall forget our debtors; if we remember our debtors, God will remember our debts. A steady, unbroken gaze on our sinfulness and wilfulness, will provide us with a sombre background against which the mercy and loving kindness of God will shine out more brightly. The more one grows in intimacy with Christ, the deeper is the sense of sin and our regret that, even to some extent unwittingly, we should have offended Him, and must daily and hourly pain Him by our gross ways and selfish inconsideration.

Tibi soli peccavi—"Against Thee alone have I

sinned." Sin is often an injury to our fellows, always an injury to ourselves; in itself and in its undying effects it is a disturbance and source of further disturbance to that moral order, which is the chief and formal part of the universal order. It is humiliating, degrading, miserable. Yet all these ills vanish in comparison with the principal malice; namely, the injury to God, the contemptuous defiance of One so great, so powerful, so terrible in His wrath; so infinitely good to all men and to me; so evidently good in Himself. *Malum coram te feci*—"I have wrought evil in Thy presence," *i.e.*, in the very face of God, advertently, knowingly; in the very bosom of God, where He carries me, nourishes and cherishes me. *Filios enutrivi et exaltavi et spreverunt me*—"I have nurtured and reared up children who have scorned Me." Not in the thought of God's dead, passive presence, but of the all-attentive presence of One, *cui omne cor patet, omnis voluntas loquitur et quem nullum latet secretum*—"to whom each heart lies open; each wish is eloquent; each secret revealed," do we find a continual restraint for good.

XXXV.

ST. MARTIN.

Desiderium habens dissolvi et esse cum Christo; scio quia manebo et permanebo vobis omnibus ad profectum vestrum.

"Lord, if I am necessary for Thy people, for their sakes I do not refuse the labour." As he in vision beheld our Lord clothed with the garment bestowed upon one who had begged in His name; so in the needs, weaknesses, and dangers of Christ's flock he by faith beheld Christ beseeching him not to desert Him but to help Him. Nor does he say "for Thy sake," but "for their sake," loving them not with a derived extrinsic love, but for that which they are in themselves, that which God has made them. 2. "If I am necessary." Which of us is so necessary that God could not effect His purpose without us, or by more efficient instruments? Yet love starves unless it can minister, and believe itself necessary to the beloved. Wherefore God has taken to Himself a mystical body full of needs; He has made His extrinsic glory dependent on us, that we might be able to exercise our love by service. For our sakes He makes us necessary to Himself, willing from each a service that He will take from no other. 3. *Non recuso laborem.* "Better to be exiled with Thee on earth, than to possess Heaven without

Thee," says à Kempis; but Martin's place with Christ was already prepared in Heaven. "Better," he seems to say, "to wander with Thee on earth, than even to be with Thee in Heaven, if Thy people have need of me;" better to be away from our Lord and to be with those whom He loves more than Himself, and to whom He has transferred all that debt of love we owe to Him.

XXXVI.

THE SPIRIT OF GLADNESS.

Gaudete in Domino semper: et iterum dico, gaudete. Modestia vestra nota sit omnibus hominibus.

Gaudete in Domino semper—"Rejoice in the Lord always." Severe austerity and gloom, or a tiresome seriousness in those who make profession of greater piety, is a grave scandal to the young and buoyant and healthy-minded, who thus begin to regard Christ's yoke as onerous and depressing. There is no small charity in the gaiety of the saints, in all that makes social life easier and brighter for others; just as there is no small scandal or hurt to the soul in any outward sadness which has the contrary effect. There is certainly no harm or hypocrisy in suppressing the appearances of inward trouble, heaviness, and depression, which we are in some degree subject to at times. The professional grumbler is often interesting at the moment, but the depressing after-effects more than counterbalance this slight advantage. Our likes and dislikes are much and foolishly intensified by sympathy. What

was bearable while we but noticed it ourselves, becomes unbearable when others have noticed it to us. There is of course a criticism which is but the outcome of a just judgment, and neither proceeds from, nor results in, any aversion or bitterness of heart; and is compatible with the wise, kindly temper of a soul which, conscious of its own frailty, can "make allowance for us all;" which is surprised at nothing, scandalized, embittered by nothing. *Gaudete semper*, need not therefore mean that blatant, silly praise of everybody and everything, which well-meaning ignorant people suppose to be a laudable sacrifice of common-sense, truth, and reason in the interests of charity.

Modestia vestra nota sit omnibus hominibus—"Let your restraint be manifest to all." Our joy is not unrestrained, but tempered by sorrow, and directed by charity. We rule it and are not to be ruled by it. So restrained and clipped, it strikes root deeper, and does not dissipate and expend itself faster than it grows, or lead to the violent reactions of those who give way to wild extravagances of hilarity. It is, therefore, quiet and, one might say, "well-bred," never unkind, or selfish, or inconsiderate; being chiefly for the sake of others, it draws and does not repel. We like to feel that those who rejoice with us in our joy, would be the first to weep with us in our sorrow.

XXXVII.

ST. STANISLAUS.

Et complexans eos, benedicebat eos.

"He took them up in His arms and blessed them," can be applied to Stanislaus, not merely as a child in years, but as a child in heart, gifted with that straightness and singleness of purpose, that absence of guile and duplicity, that faith of mind and pliability of will which facilitate God's mastery over us. Also, with that improvidence as to the future, that concentration on the present, that blind confidence in the power and good-will of others, which characterizes childhood. Wherefore God took him up in His arms and blessed him. Took him up above earth and nearer Heaven, even while yet on earth! above harm and danger, as a child who runs in terror to its mother's arms is lifted up to safety, *altissimum posuisti refugium tuum, non accedet ad te malum*—"Thou hast set Thy refuge very high so that evil cannot come nigh to Thee." Took him up, that He might embrace him and have him nearer to the Divine Heart. Took him up, that he might be carried forward swiftly and not lag behind and get lost, or, hand-led, totter along with slow uncertain steps, like most of us who so try the patience of God and hinder Him in His course. Took him up, as the good shepherd carries the lambs in his bosom, while he can only lead slowly and gently those that are with young. Took him up, finally, to His embrace in Heaven, that he might

behold the King in His beauty, not looking upward from below, but face to face, *sicuti est.* "My father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord hath taken me up"

XXXVIII.

ANXIETY.

In nihilo solliciti sitis.

"Anxiety under no circumstances," excludes spiritual as well as temporal anxiety, and must be reconcilable with the precept of vigilance. Solicitude, therefore, is anxiety concerning what is out of our power, after we have used reasonable means for the best; *e.g.*, anxiety as to not only probable, but as to merely possible temptations; as to the secrets of the future; as to extraordinary graces. Here the improvident spirit of childhood is in place. Also, vigilance and carefulness can be without worry and solicitude, which imply fear as to the results, a distrust of God's fidelity, and that *perturbatio timoris*—"or timorous agitation," which is so insulting to God, as though He were laying nets and chains for us; or as if to keep from mortal sin were as difficult as to balance oneself on a tight-rope, where a moment's inadvertence may prove fatal. *Spiritu principali confirma me*—"Confirm me with a princely spirit," with worthy conceptions of God.

XXXIX.

OUR LADY'S EXPECTATION.

Magnificate Dominum mecum et exaltemus nomen ejus.

"Magnify the Lord with me," she says, "and let us extol His Name together." If Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost and the babe in her womb leaped for joy at the advent of Mary, what must have been the inward exultation of Mary at the near advent of Jesus? As a great joy draws nearer, our desire is agitated and intensified, and we are drawn towards it almost violently and with a sense of pain, seeking relief in fruition. "As the stag gasps for the water-springs, so my soul gasps for Thee, O God; my soul is athirst for God, the Strong, the Living, when shall I come and appear before the face of God?" So the saints have watched for His coming, "as they that watch for the morning." *Expectans expectavi Dominum*—"I have waited and waited for the Lord," not with dread and awe as for a coming Judge whose sentence is yet doubtful, but with hope and impatience, longing to enter into His rest and to see Him as He is. "I long to die," says St. Paul. As Christ draws near with the day of our death, does our expectation get more impatient? is it fear or hope that increases? "The world received Him not," but the reception that Mary gave was more than He could have from a thousand worlds —a most abundant reparation and consolation. So those who expect with great longing His Eucharistic advents and receive Him warmly and reverentially,

console Him for the neglect of those in whose midst He is unknown; or if known, uncared for.

XL.

GOD'S PEACE.

Pax Dei quæ exuperat omnem sensum custodiat corda et intelligentias vestras.

"The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds." Opposite to solicitude and anxiety is this *Pax Dei*, which is, first of all, a condition for communion with God whose whispers can be heard only in the stillness of the soul.

> But when the heart is full of din,
> And doubt beside the portal waits,
> They can but listen at the gates,
> And hear the household jar within.

Secondly, there is that positive peace which God makes by His Presence, which *is* God, or which God is; for as He is subsistent Truth and Beauty, so also, subsistent Peace. Not the peace of lethargy, the slumber of *nirvana*, but of the highest activity, like the still, motionless, energizing of God, when the soul lays hold of God by clear vision and love, and steadies itself, mind and heart alike. *Irrequietum cor nostrum*—"Restless is our heart," says Augustine, until God has sunk to its very centre to give it ballast. So with the mind in regard to the chaotic problems of human life and history. With the dawning conception of God, light, order, and peace are born, to grow and strengthen into perfect day. *Custodiat corda et intelligentias vestras.* There is

the vacant peace of a heart that loves not, and of a mind that never ponders; and there is the tumult of a heart torn by the conflict of a thousand vain, wild, disordered loves, and of a mind struggling in the brambles of inextricable confusions whose common underground root is unsuspected. And there is the peace of the heart whose many loves are gathered up and converge into one; and of the mind whose problems fall into one, whose solution is faith in the goodness of God, in spite of all seeming. *Quæ exuperat omnem sensum*—"Which passes all understanding." This is verified primarily of the peace *in patria*, but also in due measure of that peace *in via*—"which the world cannot give;" for of that too, if we are to believe the saints, *Nec lingua valet dicere . . . expertus potest credere*, holds true: "Tongue cannot tell, experience alone teaches." To those who have never tasted it, its flavour is wholly unimaginable: *Gustate et videte*—"Taste and see for yourself." As the draw of a powerful magnet fixes the uncertain and fluctuating needle, so the draw that God, once tasted, exerts on the heart, brings all its sprawling, groping desires to converge upon Him steadily.

XLI.

CHRIST, OUR SUN.

O sol salutis intimis
Jesu refulge cordibus!

The prayer of the Samoyede sun-worshipper at dawn and sunset is, "When thou risest, I arise;

when thou settest, I also sink." Compare Keble's "Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear; it is not night if Thou be near." So with the soul whose "life is hid with Christ in God," of whom His light and warmth is the very life. It rises when He lifts upon it the light of His countenance, and sinks into sadness when His face is turned away. *Surge illuminare Jerusalem, quia venit lumen tuum, quia gloria Domini super te orta est*—"Arise and be enlightened, O Jerusalem, for thy Light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

XLII.

ATTACHMENTS.

Funiculus triplex difficile rumpitur.

In matters moral and spiritual one attends too little to the strength of an accumulation of individually insignificant and unnoticeable affections. Thus one feels an awe or a strong love in addressing an assembly whose single units affect one in no such way. Nor need we seek any further reason for the difference than the multiplication of slight effects into one accumulative sum total. So with the little attachments which may in the course of time fasten us to a place; none of itself is inordinate or reprehensible, or needing to be combated; each holds us, as it were, by a single hair; but all together hold us like a hawser. The only cure for such a multiple attachment would be the breaking of each of its constituent fibres. But these are each ordinate, or may even err by defect and not by excess. Therefore

the resulting tie is natural, and in no way culpable; provided one be fully resolved to give the wrench when necessary and to endure the pain.

XLIII.

THE WEAK CHOSEN.

Virtus in infirmitate perficitur.

Peter, the Rock, the firm one! Yet his natural character was warm, impulsive, and therefore unstable, unreliable. Prudence, self-possession, and a certain emotional temperateness are the usual allies or conditions of steadfastness and constancy. But the work is more evidently divine as it approaches the perfect simplicity of creative energy which draws *aliquid ex nihilo sui et subjecti*—"something out of nothing." "Hath not God chosen the weak things of this world?" *Suscitans a terra inopem et de stercore erigens pauperem ut collocet eum cum principibus populi sui*—"Lifting the needy from the earth and the poor from the mire, to set him with princes; making the barren fruitful." And all this, that no flesh may glory in His sight. Nor is this in conflict with the truth that grace does not destroy, but perfects and supplements what is good in our natural character.

XLIV.

INCREDULITY.

Nisi videro . . . non credam.

In spite of the assigned reason for his scepticism based on the insufficiency of the motives, we find the actual source of St. Thomas' unwillingness to

believe, in a wounded self-love irritated at the (perhaps unfeelingly displayed) advantage of others who enjoyed a favour which he had missed; whence an impulse to claim superiority in prudence and caution, and to throw ridicule on their credulity. In this he was aided by the natural rebellion of the imagination against anything hitherto unexperienced—a rebellion conquered only by experience which makes us *realize* what we may perhaps *believe* firmly enough. If ever any one "wished to believe," it was he; but this very wish also contributed to make him hypercritical rather than credulous. It was too good to be true. So too the other Apostles had received the report of the holy women as *deliramenta*—"ravings." Our Saviour punishes him by giving him his own way when he would fain not have it; by distrusting his trust. The very gentleness of the rebuke is incisive and severe, cutting to the heart's quick and searching out its secret ulcer ruthlessly, and yet with an intent to heal. "Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed"—*i.e.*, not that he could ever have faith in the fact now made visible and apparent, and removed from the realm of faith; but that his faith in Christ as a Prophet, needed to be experimentally restored and confirmed. Blessed are they who trust Him for His own sake: *Scio cui credidi*—"I know whom I am trusting;" and in the spirit of Peter's: *Domine ad quem ibimus?*—"Lord, to whom shall we go?"—even as we trust the word of those whom we love and worship without any experimental proof of their veracity.

XLV.

SERVING IN FEAR.

Ut sine timore de manu inimicorum nostrorum liberati serviamus illi.

"That saved from our enemies we may serve Him without fear." *Servite in timore, et exultate cum tremore*—"Serve God in fear and rejoice with trembling." "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Without fear indeed, so far as the enemies of our soul are concerned; namely, the powers of darkness, whose assaults are restrained and tempered to our strength by the guiding hand of God's supreme providence; the world, of which it is said, "Fear not, I have overcome the world;" our own frailty and changeableness—the most frequent source of anxiety and fear—of which it is written: *Non ego, sed gratia Dei mecum*—"Not I, but God's grace in me," and *Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat*—"I can do all in Christ who strengthens me." What we have to fear is, before all, the just judgments of God. Without this fear we can have no true reverential love of God. If we do not feel His majesty and His wrath, we cannot feel His humility and meekness; or understand what a love that must be which brings the Almighty

down so low. That the fear of God's judgments is not only a preamble to love, but its outwork and safeguard, which can never be too strong, is the doctrine of St. Ignatius, in his meditation on Hell. Lastly, there is that fear which is but love under its reverential aspect; which follows it step by step; the craving for union, viewed as a dread of separation; the same aspiration which can be expressed as: *Fac me tuis semper inhærere mandatis*—"Make me ever cling to Thy commandments," or as: *A te nunquam separari permittas*—"Never let me be separated from Thee."

XLVI.

RETURNING TO GOD.

Erravi sicut ovis quæ periit: quære servum tuum, quia mandata tua non sum oblitus.

"I have strayed like a lost sheep; seek me, for I remember Thy commandments." *Erravi*—"I have strayed:" no doubt, by following my own will and judgment in search of seemingly richer and better pasturage; led on heedlessly from desire to desire, delusion to delusion, till I find myself abandoned wholly to my own guidance, yet knowing not where to turn: threatened not only with hunger and want, but with exposure to the attacks of ravening wolves. Silly as a sheep is, it is better fit to guide and protect itself than is the soul of man self-governed. *Dominus regit me et nihil mihi deerit; in loco pascuæ ibi me collocavit*—"The Lord shepherds me and I shall lack nothing; He hath set Me in His pastures."

Quære servum tuum—"Seek Thy servant." If it can do nothing else, the sheep can at least bleat and cry aloud. But man cannot even, like the prodigal, "come to himself;" cannot feel his spiritual destitution; cannot send up a single cry for mercy, except aided by God's preventing grace. God must seek us, not only before we seek Him; but before we can ask Him to seek us; or wish to seek Him. *Tu enim prior excitasti me ut quærerem te*—"Thou first didst stir me up to seek Thee." Nor is there in us merit, claim, or exigency that sends up a silent appeal to Him; our only exigency is of punishment; except it be the fact of our exceeding unworthiness, which will throw out the freedom of God's mercy into clearer view. *Miserere mei; sana animam meam, quia peccavi tibi*—"Pity me and heal me just because I have sinned: my sinfulness is my merit."

Quia mandata tua non sum oblitus—"For I have not forgotten Thy commands." Forgotten they were, with a wilful forgetfulness in the moment, when absorbed in present dreamings, I went astray:

> Such sleepy dulness in that instant weigh'd
> My senses down, when the true path I left;

but not perished and uprooted from memory so as to be beyond recovery. Even this lingering memory of past happiness was the work of grace lurking in my soul and solicitous for my salvation. "Coming to myself," I "remembered the days of old and thought upon the eternal years;" I remembered "how many hired servants of my Father have bread in abundance and to spare, while I perish here with

hunger;" I remembered the commandments of that loving Wisdom, whose "ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace;" I remembered how it was with me in the days "when His light was over me and His lamp shone round my head." Yet I remembered, only because I was reminded; and I was reminded, because He was crying out to me and seeking me, that I might cry to Him to seek me.

XLVII.

PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH.

Rogate quæ ad pacem sunt Jerusalem.

"Pray for the peace of the Church." We must love Holy Church first of all for the sake of her Divine Spouse, "who loved her and washed her in His Blood;" who came from afar to seek her as His bride; to toil for her as Jacob for Rachel; who gave His Heart's Blood for her as He slept on the Cross; whose passionate love for her is the theme of the Canticles—the Divine epithalamium. "Her foundations are on the Holy Hills. The Lord loveth the gates of Sion above all the tabernacles of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of Thee, Thou City of God." We must love her intelligently for her own intrinsic beauty, the King's daughter in comely array. *Nigra sum sed formosa . . . ideo dilexit me rex*—"I am dark but beautiful, wherefore the King hath loved me." *Læva ejus sub capite meo et dextra illius amplexabitur me*—"His left hand is under my head and His right arm embraceth me." Finally, for our own sake we must love our spiritual mother;

for all that she has been to us, done for us, given us. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her skill." Storm-tost as she is, beaten with winds and waves, all but lost at times, it is for us all to pull hard and labour in rowing; or if we can do nothing else, to cry aloud: *Domine, salva nos, perimus*—"Lord, save us; we perish." True it is, that His promise of victory stands firm; but this victory is promised through human labour and prayer; and most blessed are those who shall prove to have had the largest share in the final triumph. *Abundantia diligentibus te*—"They shall have abundance that love Thee." God gives various measures of grace, some more superabundant, others less. *Diligentes me diligo*—"I love those that love Me," before they love Me, and after; before, that they may love Me; after, because they love Me—crowning My own work. If He loves those that love Him as represented in the last and least of His members; much more those to whom He has given grace to love His Mystical Body in its entirety: to say: *Domine dilexi decorem domus tuæ et locum habitationis gloriæ tuæ*—"Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy home; the shrine of Thy glory," or, *Zelus domus tuæ comedit me*—"Zeal for Thy Church hath devoured my heart." *Date et dabitur*—"Give and ye shall get" is His law, who gives us whence we can give, and the wish to give it. We gain more in praying for others than for ourselves; still more in praying for Holy Church. We should widen

our hearts and interests, and fear nothing more than a narrow self-concentration. The very essence of selfishness lies in forgetting that we are parts of a whole,—*nemo sibi vivit*—"None lives for himself"—that we are members of one mystical body; that our work is subordinate, not paramount.

XLVIII.

HELPING OTHERS.

Tu aliquando conversus confirma fratres.

"And thou in thy turn confirm thy brethren." He must stand firm himself who would confirm others—firm as a rock, or if he would share the firmness of the True Rock, he must with one hand hold firm to that Rock and stretch out the other to draw struggling souls out of the surf. And the greater the strain upon him the more firmly will he need to cling; else he will himself be destroyed. He must cling by heroic faith, and hope, and love, who could afford to understand, and feel for, and remedy the doubts and delusions of others without being himself troubled or beclouded; and to encourage others in the face of despair itself, without himself despairing and losing heart; and he must himself have found a treasure in the personal love of Christ, who would effectually persuade others to sell all for its sake. And again, his love of God must needs be strong who could afford to pour out upon men that personal love by which alone they can be brought captive to Christ, and yet not suffer his own heart to be torn away from the Rock. Nor

dare we save ourselves by leaving others to their fate, or prudently moderating our pity, or by not attending to their doubts, and fears, and unhappinesses, except so as to leave ourselves a wide margin of safety, an easy grip upon the Rock. Our Rock is a living Rock, who holds to us more than we hold to it. *Date et dabitur* is the law. The more we dare for His love, the tighter our hand is grasped; and the speciously prudent servant who hoards his strength is condemned as "wicked and slothful," and loses that which he hath.

> Freely Thou givest, and Thy word is, "freely give."
> He only who forgets to hoard has learnt to live.[1]

It is not by gathering up our affections to ourselves, by refusing to face doubts and difficulties, that we are to help others, but by strengthening our own grip on the Rock of our Truth, our Strength, our Love, till we grow incorporate with it; as did he, the weakest of men, who merited to hear, *Tu es Petrus*—"Thou art the Rock," and *Confirma fratres*—"Strengthen thy brothers."

XLIX.

THE TEARS OF JESUS.

Et lacrimatus est Jesus.

"Jesus wept." Why? Even the Jews can tell us, "Behold, how He loved him!" "For Jesus loved Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, their brother"—and this, though by His delay He had suffered him to die, that He might "rouse

[1] Keble.

him again from sleep." There are many wise persons who feel it weakness to compassionate troubles which must come to a speedy end, or soon issue in joy or gain. Our Lord was not so wise here; nor His Mother, when she wept over the grave that she knew was so soon to yield back her Son, victorious over death. No doubt in His love for Mary and Martha He wept with the weepers; but apart from this, there was the sorrow every unspoilt human heart must feel, when the eyes that have looked into ours are dulled and fixed; and the hands we have clasped are cold and rigid; and the tongue is still, and the familiar voice silent, and the heart that loved us beats no more. He who would taste every bitterness that our soul can know, could not spare Himself this, perhaps the greatest of all, the rending of the heart-strings by death and separation; that He might be "touched with a feeling for our infirmities, tempted in all points as we." Not as though God who made us could not feel for and know our least sorrow, or as though to have experienced our weakness in His assumed Humanity could make His love more delicate in our regard; but that we might not be bewildered by the mysteries of Godhead; that we might know and feel that He has known and felt as we do, not only in a higher way, which helps us little; but in the same way, which helps us much; that in labour, in weariness, in hunger, and thirst, in grief and separation, in disappointment, in fear, in agony, in death, we might approach with confidence to our High Priest who has been in labour from His youth,

who sat weary by the well, or slumbered in the storm; who hungered in the desert, and thirsted on the cross; who knew grief, and separation, and disappointment, and fear, and agony, and death; who has surely borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.

L.

HOLY CHURCH, GOD'S HOUSE.

Domine dilexi decorem domus tuæ et locum habitationis gloriæ tuæ.

"Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy house; the dwelling-place of Thy glory," was said by David with reference to the Temple of God's glory which it was his heart's desire to build (*Si introiero in tabernaculum domus meæ; si ascendero in lectum strati mei; si dedero somnum oculis meis et palpebris meis dormitationem et requiem temporibus meis donec inveniam locum Domino, et tabernaculum Deo Jacob*—where the vehemence and efficacy of this *dilexi* is manifested); and yet said by him prophetically, in the person of Him, the true David, who left the throne of His glory, and vowed a vow that He would not return into His rest, nor give sleep to His eyes, nor slumber to His eyelids, nor relax the strain of His thought, until at the cost of His Heart's blood He had established in His Mystical Body a place for the Lord, a dwelling for the God of Jacob. It is of this His Spouse that our Saviour says, "Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy house," loved the ideal of it before He went forth to realize it; and loved the realization, with

the joy of sated desire. It is the indwelling of God's glory, the true Schekina, that constitutes that inward beauty of the King's daughter, of which it is said, *ideo dilexit me rex*—"wherefore the King hath loved me." Hence the Daily Sacrifice seems equivalently to say: *Memento Domine David et omnis mansuetudinis ejus* — "Remember David and his obedience unto death." It is the pleaded memorial of the meekness, the obedience unto death, of David, *i.e.*, of the Beloved. "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

"I have loved the beauty of Thy house," *i.e.*, of the Holy Catholic Church, the Bride of the Lamb, who is now being prepared and purified for the marriage-feast. Every priest and minister, and in a measure every Christian is, like the Blessed Baptist, by office a "paranymph" or "friend of the Bridegroom." Each has a care of the beauty, the spotlessness, the honour of the Mystical Body that he may present her to Christ immaculate, "not having spot or wrinkle;" *Despondi enim vos uni viro virginem castam exhibere Christo.* He felt this love who sang, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning;" or, *Propter Sion non tacebo et propter Jerusalem non quiescam donec egrediatur ut splendor justus ejus. Qui reminiscimini Domini, ne taceatis, et ne detis silentium ei, donec ponat Jerusalem laudem in terra.*[1]

[1] Isaias lxii.

LI.

THE FAMILY, GOD'S HOUSE.

Domine dilexi decorum domus tuæ.

Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum fratres habitare in unum—"Lo how good and joyous for brothers to dwell in unity." The beauty of every Christian household or community where God dwells and is glorified, is the beauty of peace and charity and mutual reverence, which constrains men to give glory to Christ and say, "See how these Christians love one another." On such an household the Psalm says, God's blessing descends like the dew on Hermon, or like the sacred oil poured upon the head of Aaron, and running down in its abundance over the ephod. "For there the Lord has promised His blessing, and life for evermore." *Propter fratres meos et proximos meos loquebar pacem de te; propter domum Domini Dei nostri quæsivi bonum tibi. Pax huic domui, et omnibus habitantibus in ea*—"For my brethren's and kindred's sake I will wish thee peace; and for the sake of the Lord's house which is in thee." "Peace to this house and to all that dwell therein." "Let Thy angels dwell in it to keep us in peace, and let Thy blessing be upon us always." —*Angeli tui sancti habitent in ea qui nos in pace custodiant; et benedictio tua sit super nos semper.*

LII.

OUR SOUL, GOD'S HOUSE.

Domine dilexi decorem domus tuæ.

Applicable first to one's own soul, which is by destiny the house of God, the dwelling of His glory; which is beautified and adorned by all those virtues of peace and purity and humility which make it a fit nest for the Dove; and where our passions, affections, emotions, well ordered, yet strong and vigorous, make harmonious melody in our heart to the praise of God; where there is nothing excessive, discordant, ill-attuned; but, variety without confusion, unity without poverty or monotony. Such a love begets a consuming zeal which drives forth violently all that could profane the house of prayer and worship, and make it a den of thieves.

Applicable also to our body, which is the temple of the engraced soul, of which it is said, "Whoso defileth God's Temple him will God destroy." Chastity is the white robe which beautifies and becomes that flesh which is sanctified by a thousand titles; by mystic union with the Word made Flesh; by repeated Eucharistic transformations; by its destiny to a glorification and spiritualization through His power who will change this body of our humiliation and make it like to His glorious Body. And in due measure, as far as weakness permits, not only chastity, but modesty, cleanliness, and every honourable treatment is due to this flesh which God has made His very own,

spiritualized, divinized; nor can it be irreverently dealt with, without irreverence to the mystical, and sacramental, and physical Body of our Lord. *Peccat caro, mundat caro; regnat Deus Dei caro.*

Applicable to the souls of others, for whose sanctification true charity is zealous; and whose hurt or scandal is a scandal and hurt to our own soul: "Who is weak and I am not weak; who is scandalized and I do not burn?" Those who have felt the pang of seeing, in some charge dear to them, the first innocence of childhood giving way to the first stain of sin, and gradually clouded over and obliterated, may in some weak way realize the sufferings of our Saviour's Heart over souls that are wrested from Him, and in which His Father's image is torn down and defaced and the abomination of desolation set up in the sanctuary of the Indwelling Glory.

Applicable to the love which saints and holy souls have had for the earthly dwelling-places of the Eucharistic Presence; to whom it was ever joyful news to be summoned into that Presence; who if compelled to be absent in body have ever been present there in spirit. And as saints have honoured that Presence with the gold of charity, the myrrh of purity, the incense of holy aspirations; so the wisest of this world have loved to bring their gifts from afar and to cast them at the feet of the Giver of all.

Applicable to the love of hope and to our longing for the Vision of Peace. *Quam dilecta tabernacula*—"How longed-for are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of

hosts." *Quemadmodum desiderat*—"As the hart pants for the streams, so my soul for Thee." *Defecit in salutare tuum anima mea*—"My soul has fainted for Thy salvation, saying, when wilt Thou console me." *Deus, Deus meus, ad te de luce vigilo*—"O God, my God, I watch for Thee from the dawn."

If Heaven is His throne, earth is His footstool, where He is revealed by His traces and footprints. The skies and clouds are telling His glory, and the firmament showing His handiwork; and all the works of the Lord, sun and moon, land and sea, hills and valleys, and all they contain, "bless the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him for ever." In Him all things live, move, and are; and He is in all, though distinct from all, as the mountain from the thick mist that cloaks it, betraying its barest outline and no more. It is no small grace to feel God in nature, pressing on us on all sides, moving in our every pulse, and thinking with our every thought. "Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory," *i.e.*, permeated with it, as a crystal with the light which gives it all its beauty. "He is nearer to us than we think," just because we do not think. Yet those who love to ponder the footprints of His glory will at last be constrained to confess, "Surely the Lord was in this place and I knew it not." Custom and wont have held our eyes, so that we know Him not; or at least heed Him not, as we do not heed the air we breathe; so that men will deny Him to His very face. He who wrote the *Benedicite* or the *Laudate Dominum de cœlis*, loved the beauty of this earthly house of God, and the dwelling-place of His glory.

LIII.

HARDNESS OF HEART.

A facie frigoris ejus quis sustinebit. Emittet verbum suum et liquefaciet ea; flabit spiritus ejus et fluent aquæ.

"Who can stand out against His frost? He shall send forth His word and thaw them; His wind shall blow, and the streams shall run again." When the sun withdraws himself, the waters are frozen into solid ice. We forget that their fluidity depends every moment upon his influence; and that of themselves, they are hard, dark, and cold. When the heart resists grace, time after time, and shuts out the sunshine which struggles in at every open chink, God withdraws Himself, and there follows the ice-age of *obcæcatio et obduratio*—of judicial blindness and hardness. The wish to be better; the feeling of remorse or dissatisfaction; of the need of God; every vital spark from which the flame of charity might spring up again is extinct. There is no hope except in the free mercy of God, who will not be angry for ever, and who will turn to us that we may turn to Him; as the returning sun draws round to itself the averted sunflower. *Emittet verbum suum et liquefaciet ea*—"He shall speak the word and melt them." It is by "the

word of His power," by some message to the soul from within or without, that the hardness of our heart is relaxed. It was by sending His Word into this ice-bound world of sin that the soil was softened under the influence of the second spring. *Jam hiems transiit imber abiit et recessit. Veritas de terra orta est. Etenim Dominus dabit benignitatem et terra nostra dabit fructum suum*—"Now the winter is gone, the rain is passed and over. Truth has sprung up from the earth. Yea, God shall give His blessing and earth shall yield her fruit." We perceive the light of fire before we feel its warmth. *Flabit spiritus ejus et fluent aquæ*—"His breath shall blow and the rivers shall run again." As under the soft, warm wind the ice and snow are converted into streams and torrents, so the breath of the Paraclete draws tears of compunction from the thawed and penitent heart. *Conversus Dominus respexit Petrum . . . et cœpit flere*—"God turned and looked on Peter, and he began to weep." Till He turns and looks upon us, our heart goes from bad to worse, from hardness to hardness. When He turns to us, then we "remember the word which He spake," and the ice is dissolved into tears.

LIV.

BEFORE COMMUNION.

Domine non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum.

My house is full of noise and tumult and worldly comforts and appliances, and the door is shut and barred, and the importunity of the midnight visitor

is hateful to me. *Tantum dic verbo*, say but the word and my soul shall be healed. Change the inn to a cave; shatter the door and ruin the walls, "that the King of Glory may come in." Let Joseph go before to prepare the rude resting-place, and let Mary follow, and in the very midst of my soul bring forth her Firstborn. *Mater Divinæ gratiæ, ora pro nobis.*

LV.

LOVE'S ARCHETYPE.

Ego et Pater, Unum sumus.

"Consubstantial with the Father," not merely similar, not the exact counterpart, reflexion, replica; but the same substance in no way distinct or distinguishable, held in common by two, as though two men had one body between them and one soul, thinking, willing, acting, not alike, but identically. This is no barren or fruitless dogma to those who have dwelt on the mystery of Love with its craving for union, absorption, identification, and its conflicting demand for distinctness, or "otherness," its protest against extinction. It is in the mystery of the Trinity that Love finds that archetype which the pantheist or Buddhist seeks in vain. "That they all may be one as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee." "I in them and Thou in Me, that we all may be perfect in one." For what is it Love wants? To give itself wholly and entirely; and yet to be itself and distinct; to efface every divergence in thought, will, interest, nature, place, time, and yet to be other, and loved by another, *as other*. And it seeks,

not only to be absorbed and to give, but to absorb and receive; for union or identity is a mutual relation. Yet it seeks not that the other should cease to be other, though all of that other's should cease to be his;—"All mine is thine, and all thine is mine." "He shall take of mine and give it unto you." Personality is of the very notion of love, on the part of both subject and object; and union is no less so; distinctness and yet fusion. It is not, therefore, such a union with God as pantheists or quietists put before us, that we really crave for;—the union by which a drop is absorbed and dispersed in the ocean, losing its separateness and individuality; or by which a wave or ripple on the face of a pond is smoothed out as a disturbance of its former lifeless tranquillity. No doubt there is something that touches a responsive chord within us in such an aspiration as:

> God, in pain and anguish, make me one with Thee
> One with hill and sky-line, one with surging sea.

Sick with the sense of our own feebleness, transitoriness, nothingness, as compared with the quasi-eternity, infinity, inexhaustible beauty, power, and goodness of Nature, there arises some vague longing to be incorporate with the Whole, the All, which our fancy personifies; a longing to be ourselves the world-soul, and not the soul of a miserable little parasitic frame of humanity. This, rightly analyzed, is no desire for extinction, but for the greatest imaginable fulness of personal existence. Further, so interpreted, this is an aspiration rather

of the *love of desire*, than of the *love of friendship*. It is self-love crying out for its *bonum satiativum*, for the boundless, the eternal, the all-beautiful, for the life, and food of life, which its natural exigencies crave for—and yet vainly, being made for God alone, *non ad hæc natus*—for even "heaven and earth shall pass away." "They shall perish, but Thou remainest; they shall all wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them and they shall be changed, but Thou art the self-same and Thy years shall not fail."

And yet this *love of desire* is not the strongest or highest craving. More imperative is the demand for friendship or society in beings who can know and reflect. *Sine amico non potes bene vivere*—"Without a friend thou canst ill live." *Amare et amari*, is the soul's desire according to Augustine; to love others, and be loved in return. It is only so far as our imagination in some way personifies Nature (as a whole or in certain manifestations), that we can feel drawn towards her with sentiments of love or worship, and a desire of self-subjection. Let every conceivable perfection and attribute that we find in Nature, be concentrated eminently in one being, yet until that being is known to be intelligent, self-loving, personal, our love in its regard is but a kind of envy which grasps at those perfections and would have them our own—eternity immensity, might, form, beauty. But in a person there is something we cannot even wish to appropriate, since distinctness is of its very notion; while at the same time there is an intense desire to surrender

all one has to this other, saving only one's distinctness, and to receive a like surrender in return, so that *all*, as far as conceivable, should be in common, should be one possession of two possessors. "All mine is thine and all thine is mine." "Thou in me and I in thee." Then indeed the *amicus* becomes, not the *ego* but the *alter ego*, in so far as all possessions, goods, actions, thoughts, interests, are perfectly common and indistinguishable.

Personal love seeks to bind to itself a *person* and not to a *thing;* and the only conceivable bond is fusion and community of possessions and attributes. It cannot desire fusion of personality, since that which is essentially *distinctness* is destroyed by fusion So far as friends have the same human nature, like thoughts, loves, cares, and interests and so forth, thus far are they united. It is in the Mystery of the Trinity that we find this union carried to its infinite perfection, where, between Three Persons there is, not a likeness, but a numerical sameness of nature, thought, will, and operation; and withal, a distinctness of person between the three possessors of this one possession, which in order of origin belongs first to the Father, and is by Him communicated to the Son, and by both to the Holy Spirit.

LVI.

UNION WITH GOD.

Ego in eis, et tu in me ut sint consummati in unum.

In the natural order our highest union with God is by perfect self-tradition, by likeness of thought and will and operation, and yet by the maintenance of personal distinctness in its purity. Hence I believe pantheism is opposed to the testimony of our inner consciousness in confounding a craving for union, with a craving for absorption. In the order of grace there is not merely a likeness, but a sameness of being and operation; a mystical participation of the Divine Nature. As the operations of the Three Persons are from one principle, and are one operation, and yet truly the operation of each Person; so analogously the love that God works in us by grace is the operation of the Holy Spirit and ours at the same time. It is we who love and it is the Spirit who loves. As the Eternal Son uses the Sacred Humanity as an instrument whereby to render to the Father the love of a human heart; so in some way our soul becomes the instrument of the indwelling Spirit. "God has sent His Spirit into our hearts crying, Abba, Father." The cry is at once His and ours. To the Eternal Son we are bound by a double bond—by the indwelling of His Divinity and of His Humanity, the participation of His two-fold Life. "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me and I in Him; as the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me." He as the deified Head; we, as the members of one Mystic Body

quickened by one indwelling spirit, are joint-holders of a common possession, with one end and perfection to which all aspire and conspire, namely, that *communicatio beatitudinis* or *bonum Divinum*, which is the bond of charity.

LVII.

GOD'S FACE.

Ostende faciem tuam et salvi erimus.

"Show us Thy face and we shall be saved." "Turn not away Thy face from me lest I be like them that go down into the pit." We must turn our back upon God before He will turn His back upon us; but He must turn His face to us, before we can turn our face to Him. The disciples on the road to Emmaus looked in His face, yet they knew Him not till He looked upon them, till He showed them His face, in the breaking of bread. Our eyes are holden, veiled, and mist-clouded, till the sun itself disperses the film and bursts through upon our gaze. The beauty, the comeliness, the grace, of the Son of Man, moves us in no wise until viewed with the eyes of the heart. To see His face, this is charity; this is the beatifying vision already begun. It is the *delectare in Domino* of David; the delight of beholding the face of the Beloved,

For ever fixed in no unfruitful gaze.

"This is life eternal, to *know* Thee;" nor does the *Vita æterna inchoata*, the life of charity, herein differ from the life of Beatitude. As bodily beauty delights the eye of sense, so the eye of the soul feasts its gaze on the spiritual beauty of Christ, and lingers

over every line and point. *Jesu dulcis memoria dans vera cordi gaudia*, says Bernard, *sed super mel et omnia ejus dulcis præsentia;* whether as present to memory only, or to intuition; whether in its image or its very reality, it is the Divine Face which is the cause of inward joy and sweetness. *Ostende faciem tuam et salvi erimus:* it is the true aspect of God which saves us and quickens us. As art refines our observation and taste, and makes us love Nature more tenderly for new beauties to which our uncultured eye was dim and obtuse: so our soul has to be schooled into the right reading of the Divine Beauty which the crowd presses upon, but which few discern or touch. Hence St. Paul always prays that in his children the *knowledge* of Christ may abound; "whom to know is to love." *Surge amica mea, speciosa mea et veni. Ostende mihi faciem tuam, sonet vox tua in auribus meis; quia vox tua dulcis et facies tua decora. Revertere revertere Sunamita, ut intueamur te.*

Ostende faciem tuam et salvi erimus. "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." For here we see in a riddle or through a darkened glass; there, face to face: here, I know in part; there, I shall know, even as I am known. *Ibunt de virtute in virtutem; videbitur Deus deorum in Sion* — They shall go as it were from vision to vision, from weaker to stronger light, till the last filmy veil is left behind, and they are face to face with the sun in his splendour; *videbimus eum sicuti est*—"We shall see Him, not as He is said to be, not as He seems to be, but as He is."

"Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," this is our all-sufficing Good.

LVIII.

TIMES OF VISITATION.

Vox clamantis in deserto.

The voice of one calling out in the desert, crying with the loud cry of God's extraordinary graces as contrasted with the persistent whispers of daily promptings. Neglect has deafened us to the latter: grace must now cry with a loud voice, *Lazare, veni foras*—"Lazarus, come forth!" "Cry aloud," O Lord, "and spare not; lift up Thy voice as a trumpet, proclaim to Thy people their iniquities, and their sins to the house of Jacob." "Crying in the desert," through which the King must pass in His royal progress, the desert full of waste places, hills and hollows, windings and turnings—our wild, uncultivated hearts. And crying, "Prepare the way," for the fruit will answer to the preparation, even as seed needs a favourable soil. We must break up the hard, frost-bound earth, and "make broad our furrows," and pray for the God-given rain of penitential tears. And yet as it is He alone that can call us to get ready, so it is by Him alone we can answer the call. The work is "begun, continued, and ended, in Him."

LIX.

THE CONCERT OF CREATION.

Cum quibus et nostras voces ut admitti jubeas deprecamur.

Te Deum laudamus. "*I* praise Thee, O God," sounds feeble and presumptuous Praise must be in concert, fulness, and harmony, if it is to be at all. Even, "*We* beseech Thee," "*Our* Father," is immeasurably more efficacious than "I beseech Thee," "My Father." More efficacious because it is the act of that Body whose bond is charity or of the individual as bound to that Body by charity. It is then, not I who pray but Christ's Mystic Body, or Christ. But it is in praise that we feel our weakness and isolation most of all It is as though a conqueror were hailed by my one feeble voice in a myriad-throated silent multitude. He whose own Heart is full of praise cannot rest till He has communicated the flame of His enthusiasm to all around Him His mission is to send fire on the earth and to see that it be kindled to draw all hearts into sympathy with His own. "*We* praise Thee;" and in this *concentus*, not only must all mankind unite, *Reges et omnes principes terræ, juvenes et virgines, senes cum junioribus*—"Kings and princes, youths and virgins, old men and boys," but the angels of God;—*Tibi omnes angeli, tibi cherubim et seraphim Laudate eum omnes angeli ejus. Cum quibus et nostras voces ut admitti jubeas deprecamur*—and every single creature living or lifeless;—sun, moon, and stars; winds, seas, storms, mists, dew,

frost, cold, mountains, hills, valleys, streams, rivers, trees, shrubs, harvests, fruit, flowers, fish, reptiles, birds, insects, brutes, cattle, *omnis spiritus laudet Dominum. Confiteantur tibi Domine omnia opera tua;* all must lend their voice in due measure to perfect that chord of praise which swells up continually to God's ears from the whole *as whole;* the universe invisible and visible, the heaven and earth of the beginning. "Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory." Filled with this sense of lonely nothingness, insignificance, solitary unmeaningness, a helpless single string in the many-stringed harp of creation, David cries aloud to men and angels, heaven and earth, to the great all: *Magnificate Dominum mecum* —"Oh, magnify the Lord *with me*, and let us praise His Name *together*." This is indeed,

> To know my spirit a note
> Of this great chorus, one with bird and stream
> And voiceful mountain—nay, a string, how jarred
> And all but broken! of that lyre of life
> Whereon himself, the master harp-player,
> Resolving all its mortal dissonance
> To one immortal and most perfect strain,
> Harps without pause, building the world with song.[1]

As in harmonized music the varying parts are bound together by their common relation to the melody through which they are related one to another: so in the *concentus* of creation it is through man and in reference to man that the voices of all other visible creatures are heard; and it is as harmonizing with the voice of the Son of Man,

[1] W. Watson.

high above all, that our praises are acceptable. Through Christ and in Christ, God has hypostatically assumed this concerted praise of creation and made it a Divine act. *Per ipsum et cum ipso et in ipso, est tibi Deo Patri, in unitate Spiritus Sancti omnis honor et gloria.*

LX.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

Tota pulcra es Maria.

"Thou, O Mary, art altogether fair," *i.e.*, from the very first instant of existence, with an unbroken, ever-growing fairness. The totality of our aspect in the eyes of God is to be measured, not only by our present state or appearance, but by our whole past, in which before the eternal gaze the present is embedded, as in its setting or frame, or as a text in the midst of its commentary. So regarded, of no soul but one can it be said, *tota pulcra es*, not even of the "greatest born of women." What can be said of me? Even allowing my soul a certain present *pulcritudo*, yet in the midst of so much past unsightliness is there enough for the Divine gaze to rest upon with pleasure, or not rather more than enough to make it turn from me in loathing? *Tota fœda es*—"Thou art all foul." And yet not *tota*. For as God for the sake of ten just would have overlooked the corruption of Sodom; so for the sake of that one present little spark of love which He has kindled in my heart, and which I have not yet extinguished,

He will look upon me with love; and for love of that little beauty will endure my manifold unsightlinesses, and "count it as nothing though He should give all His substance for love." For the love of God, is the one and sufficient beauty of the soul, the perfection of its knowledge, the perfection of its will. It is its highest assimilation and likeness to God, who alone fully knows and loves His own goodness. What we love we become. To love the Beautiful is to be beautiful. For love is but a greeting of self in some other disguise, whether it be our love of God or His love of us.

LXI.

GOD IN THE DARKNESS.

Ignis, grando, nix, glacies, spiritus procellarum, quæ faciunt verbum ejus.

"Fire, hail, snow, ice, stormy gales, which do His bidding." Destruction, temptation, affliction, disease, death, all bear part in the praise of God. Even by sin, though not by the sinner, God is praised. Here heat and cold and wind are considered in their excess and intemperance, as ministers of God's chastising love or consuming justice. "He makes the winds His messengers, and the flame of fire His minister." 'He rides upon the wings of the wind"—not the heat that warms and cherishes, but that which scorches and burns; not the cold that cools and refreshes, but which chills and deadens; not the breeze that soothes and invigorates, but the gale which uproots and devastates. It is a higher thought, a higher faith and confidence and love, which, with Job, can praise God for His chastisements, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

LXII.

ST. STEPHEN.

Plenus gratia et fortitudine faciebat prodigia.

"Full of grace and fortitude he wrought wonders." Christian fortitude is that courage which braves the extremest dangers, not from any other motive, how laudable soever, but solely for the love of Christ. It is the strength of a "love stronger than death," and which "many waters cannot drown." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life *for his friend*" —a love which finds its archetype in God, who, "when we were yet sinners," saw enough in us to die for. Even the weakest and most cowardly creatures, poor nervous feeble birds, become terrible and reckless of their lives for love of their brood. Small wonder if in Stephen and many another, the personal love of Christ has wrought "signs and prodigies;" boldness of spech in the very teeth of emperors (*loquebar de testimoniis tuis in conspectu regum et non confundebar*—"I spake of Thy testimonies before kings and was not ashamed"), and resistance *usque ad sanguinem*—"even to blood." 2. "I see the heavens opened." Here is the source of that "grace and fortitude"—a clear unclouded view of the world beyond the veil; a faith that rends the heaven and lets our sight rest on the reality and "substance of things hoped for," which dissolves the world around us into a misty dream, a continual "passing away." 3. "And Jesus standing at the right

hand of God," for this is in epitome the substance of the Christian revelation—the Incarnate, obedient unto death, exalted and crowned with glory and honour, and given a Name which is above every name, the pledge of our exaltation; for "if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." If Christ Himself was helped to endure the Cross by the foresight of the joy to follow (*proposito sibi gaudio sustinuit crucem*), it was fitting that Stephen should be encouraged by a vision of the joy of his Lord into which he was to enter.

LXIII.

THE INCARNATION.

Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem, descendit de cœlis.

Had He come as God Incarnate into an unfallen world, He need not have laid aside the finite glories that were His birthright; He need not have passed through weakness, humiliation, pain, and death, to the recovery of what was His, had He not been stripped of it by sin. That the Son of Man should have also been a "Man of Sorrows," "emptied of His glory," "obedient to death," this was the effect of mercy, occasioned by sin. *Et propter nostram salutem.*—We need not, however, suppose that antecedent to the forevision of the Fall, an Incarnation had been decreed; but may believe that God, casting about, so to say, in the infinite resources of His Divine intellect and power, for an order of things which should manifest

His attributes, chose that in which His mercy and generosity would be displayed more fully. He chose, rather than the contrary, that world in which the race, engraced and elevated, would cast away its privileges; in which iniquity should abound that grace might superabound; in which His good gifts would be despised, squandered, abused, not merely by some, but by most; in which His richest schemes of mercy would be thwarted by man's perversity; in which He would gladly spend Himself and be spent, though the more He loved, the less He would be loved; in which, in a word, His labour should be largely in vain, His love largely unreturned. For plainly this is the showing forth of a far more prodigal and wonderful love, a love of the undeserving and unthankful. Had all men used His graces, what should we have known of His tender mercies, fulness of compassion, longsuffering, and great goodness? We should have known Christ, but not Jesus; the King, but not the Saviour.

Descendit de cœlis. His whole Incarnate Life was a descent, a coming down from the highest to the level of the lowest and least, sin only excepted. It was a continual self-suppression and elimination of all that could difference or distance Him from the weakest and most helpless child of Adam. He thought His birthrights of bodily glory, power, impassibility, not things to be grasped at and clung to; but rather emptied Himself of them all, and put on the likeness of sinful flesh, the garb of a servant, that He might be accessible to all—the friend of publicans and sinners. The Pharisee—a separatist

by name and profession and practice—stood high on the pedestal of his legal perfection, and thanked God he was not as other men. Christ "exulted in spirit, and gave thanks," that He *was* as other men, and hid Himself from the wise and prudent, and revealed Himself to little ones—*Venite ad me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde.* He is altogether approachable; not severe, or magisterial, or dictatorial; not one to stand on His dignity and keep His distance, but always ready to yield, to come down, to accommodate Himself, being made all things to all men, that by all means He may gain some, if not all.

LXIV.

THE BETTER PART.

Maria autem elegit eam optimam partem, quæ non auferetur ab ea in æternum.[1]

The application of these words ("Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall never be taken from her"), and of this episode to this feast, is, at first sight, strange. No doubt it means amongst other things that there is a higher and a lower service of God, of which the latter may be interrupted by sickness, death, and a thousand contingencies; which of itself is the accidental and separable embodiment of our love, but not its very essence; which is anxious and distracted, and easily corruptible and corrupting. The former is the one thing needful; the quickening principle of the other. It is independent of life,

[1] Communion for the Assumption.

or death. or any other creature; uninterrupted, "which shall never be taken from us;" unfailing, for "charity never faileth." Such was pre-eminently the service of Mary; one prolonged *Magnificat* continued from time into eternity without respect to life or death. The Magdalene sat at His feet and heard His words; His Mother kept all these sayings and pondered them in her heart and uttered them in her song. The life of praise is the highest life, the final and everlasting life; and there is no death to that life: "He that liveth and believeth shall never die;" for the life of praise is the eternal life. Martha flits here and there, comes and goes, but Mary sits, ever fixed in one unbroken gaze; and passes, unmoved, from life through death into fuller life; as it were, in a dream. Yet this highest life is also the most active and productive, and likest that of God, whose still gaze on the face of His Son is the cause of all movement and production. Fruitfulness is the greatest of graces, for which Mary gives thanks, saying, *Beatam me dicent omnes generationes;* all generations shall bless the great Mother of Life; the womb that bore our Life, and the breasts that fed Him; that have borne and fed us and "all generations." Great energy works tranquilly; the most divine and universal causes are likest God in their fruitful rest; furthest from solicitude and perturbation about many things. Mary knew no travail pangs. Even by the Cross, when with Jesus she tasted all the sorrows of all our race, she stood, motionless—*Stabat Mater.* It is rather faith and philosophy, than sight

and experiment, which assure us that the highest life must also be the most fruitful for others; the efficiency follows excellence. Those do most, who seem to do nothing; those do nothing, who seem to do most. God and Nature work silently, secretly. The Kingdom of Heaven cometh "without observation." Those who reap and bear home the sheaves get all the credit; those who plough and sow; the fostering sun, the rain, the generous soil; God the all-giver, all-mover, are forgotten. We talk of unknown saints, but what of the unknown progenitors of science, and art, and progress, and of all our greatness? Which of those who have entered into their labours, knows or thanks them? The effect of the best and greatest work is felt only when its author is untraceable—or rather its authors, for it derives from a confluence of imperceptible streamlets. "To be," is more than "to do," and does more. The fruit of Martha's ministrations might easily be computed; but the whole world is still filled with the odour of Mary's spikenard, with the influence of her silent love.

LXV.

INCONSTANCY.

Animam meam pro te, ponam.

"I will lay down my life for thee." We say such things in warm moments of love and friendship, and mean them from the depths of our heart; though in the chill and darkness of depression and failure we deny our friend and desert him. We do

not value present love less, because it is frail and changeable; nor does God despise the bright flame that now leaps up in my heart because He foresees it will sink and flicker even to extinction for a time or for ever.

LXVI.

THE CRUCIFIX.

Omnis enim figura ejus amorem spirat et ad redamandum provocat; caput inclinatum; manus expansæ, pectus apertum.

"His whole form breathes out love and provokes love in return; the head bowed down; the hands outstretched; the heart laid bare." (1) *Caput inclinatum.* Apart from the very beauty of posture which makes the crucifix a noble theme of art, there is an exhaustless wealth of beauty which we read into it in the light of faith. It is an eye-word which ever clothes itself with richer and fuller meaning, so that at one glance we take in more food for mind and heart than the ear could receive in an hour. The head inclined speaks to us of the infinite gentleness and condescension of Him who bows down to listen to our cries and prayers: *Memento mei, Domine, dum veneris in regnum tuum. Inclina, Domine, aurem tuam et exaudi me. Fiant aures tuæ intendentes, in vocem deprecationis meæ*— of a tender pity that in the midst of torments is self-forgetful and intent only on the sorrows of those who stand by the foot of His Cross; of obedience to the Divine love continued from birth till bowing His Head He gave up the ghost. *Amorem spirat et ad redamandum provocat.* It all breathes love and

invites to love, to a love that drags us down and takes all the stiffness and pride out of us; which is at the feet of all, girt about for their service, which is wistful and watchful for the needs and sorrows of others. (2) *Manus expansæ*, speaking to us of the width and comprehensiveness of His love, inviting all, embracing all; pardoning, tolerating, overlooking offences. This is easy to say, but hard to believe; and because the invitation is only half believed, it is little heeded: *Expandi manus meas tota die ad populum incredulum*—He is ever stretching out His hands to those who cannot believe that He means it. (3) *Pectus apertum*. If His Heart, laid open to our eyes, and cleft and broken with grief, does not breathe love and provoke a return, we may put our crucifix aside and pray God to create a new heart in us and renew us with a right spirit; or turn to Mary for grace to read the crucifix with her eyes: *Fac me tecum pie flere, crucifixo condolere.*

LXVII.

GOD'S ATTRIBUTES.

Considerate lilia agri.

We shall never get to love God by meditating on His attributes, unless we are first trained to love those attributes in their finite manifestations. Men cannot love or praise God for His mercy or liberality, or truth or justice, who are not lovers of these things already. If I do not know what love is in its highest manifestations, in father, mother, brother, friend, lover, it is vain to tell me that God loves as all

these and infinitely more. Infinity is at best a negative notion, and affects our imagination and our heart but little. It is all important that the co-factors it multiplies should be as full and rich and concrete as possible. *Considerate lilia agri*, says Christ. A man must be taught to see a glory in their array greater than that of Solomon, before that "delighted with their beauty," he "can know that their Lord is more beautiful by far; for it is the begetter of all beauty that hath made them all."[1]

LXVIII.

THE GRACE OF LONG LIFE.

Ut sis longævus super terram.

"That thou mayest live long upon the earth." It is almost a truism to say that we never elect twice under precisely the same conditions, and that any given individual choice once made is made for ever. For even were the two elections to follow each other without interval, there would in the second case be the new circumstance of having chosen just before. Furthermore, the basis of knowledge and experience on which we choose is widening every hour of our life and giving more deliberateness and importance to our choice. We put little confidence in the piety of children; and we have good hope for their reformation if they are vicious; for we know on how slight and partial a view of good and evil their decision rests, how imperfectly they reckon the cost on either side.

[1] Wisdom xiii.

Blessed the man who is tempted, for *cæteris paribus*, it is a more honourable salvation to have been tried long and variously, and at that last and fullest review of the whole question, which is flashed through our mind in the moment of death, to have chosen God, than if in early childhood we had been rapt away lest malice and deceit should alter our first good purposes. *Tanquam aurum in fornace probavit eos et invenit eos dignos se.*

LXIX.

GOD, OUR HAPPINESS.

Salus tua sum ego.

For one who has the faith, the greatest happiness and substantial peace of his soul is the grace and favour of God. This sounds unreal; because we do not notice or attend to permanent and habitual comforts. To tell a man that he enjoys the air he breathes more than music he hears, sounds nonsense; but deprive him of both, and which will he ask for first? Unconscious as we are of the presence of grace when we have got it, and altogether miserable as we may be at the same time about other things; let us but lose it, or think we have lost it, and what other happiness can console us, or what other misery concern us? We mostly love God far more than we think; and it is only real or fancied separation that first opens our eyes to the extent to which He is entwined and woven into our life.

LXX.

GOD, ABOVE ALL.

Diliges Dominum ex toto corde tuo.

To love God above all things else, taken collectively, is needful for salvation, but compatible with all manner of venial sin. To love Him with our whole heart, and alone, is perfection and beatitude. He is loved alone when all else is loved only in Him and for Him as He loves it Himself. This, far from lessening the extension or intension of our natural affections, increases both, indefinitely, and in a higher plane. In proportion as this reference of all to Him, from being habitual and implicit, becomes naturally explicit and actual, does one approximate towards the life of vision. It is in Purgatory that this perfect chastening of the affections is attained and the soul thereby proximately disposed for its final elevation. When we say that man's task in life is to get to love God, we do not speak of substantial love (*super omnia*), which is requisite, due, and possible from the outset; but of perfect love (*toto corde*), which is not the precept, but the *finis precepti*, the end at which the precept aims.

LXXI.

GOD'S DOINGS INSCRUTABLE.

Quam investigabiles viæ ejus.

"For My ways are not as your ways, nor My thoughts as your thoughts"—and yet our ways seem at times so clearly the best, the only prudent ways; and our thoughts, so self-evidently good and high. Is all chaos, and is there no guide to what is absolutely and objectively right and true? Is God so unknowable as to be beyond all our calculations? May black be white with Him, and white black? "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways." The higher does not deny, but includes the lower. What is imprudent can never be prudent, what is false never true. But what is truly prudent to limited foresight and for the conditions seen, may be infinitely short-sighted for eyes reaching from end to end and disposing of all things sweetly. Wherefore if God's plans are other than mine, it is not that mine are bad, but that His are better. If, as they say in the schools, He does not answer My prayer *formally*, He answers it *eminently;* for He is even "more willing to hear than we to pray, and is wont to give more than we ask or merit." "Put yourself in his place," is the advice we give to one who is at a loss to understand the conduct of another. When our imagination and reason can lift us into God's place, then, and only then, can we expect to understand

His ways. The presumption that our predictions and calculations of His movements are right is simply infinitesimal; and yet pious credulity, noting only its successful guesses, forgetting its countless blunders, goes on posing as God's secretary and confidential agent. "How incomprehensible are His judgments, and His ways past finding out. Who hath known the Lord's meaning, or who hath been His adviser, or who first gave Him anything, and he shall be rewarded?" A stronger faith and better taught is that which is led blindfolded and does not see, nor ask to see *how* God works all things round to the good of those who love Him.

LXXII.

GROWTH IN GRACE.

Filioli mei quos iterum parturio donec Christus formetur in vobis.

"My children, with whom I am in travail anew, until Christ be formed in you." Under one aspect, spiritual birth, or regeneration, or conversion, consists in the development and filling-in of an idea, the idea of Christ. Our childish conception is but notional, a mere framework or skeleton, waiting to be clothed with flesh and nerves, and to become a living reality. "This is *life*, that they should *know* Thee." When Christ is thus fully conceived and formed in our minds, our heart is at once subdued to Him (*Tibi se cor meum totum subjicit; quia te contemplans totum deficit*), and we become "enthusiasts," men possessed by God,

dominated by an Idea which lives and speaks and loves back. And to generate this idea in the minds of men is the painful and laborious task of the Apostle. First of all it must be the form and clothing of his own mind; and then he must prepare the mind of others to receive it; he must raise them gradually from height to height, till at last they are proximately disposed for the full truth. And when it is expressed and brought forth, it still needs careful watching lest it be corrupted, or perverted, before it has hardened into the substance of the formed mind. It is because he has begotten in them the very form and fashion of his own soul that St. Paul calls his converts, *filioli;* for the sons are sharers of the father's nature and form. So our Saviour: *Ecce ego et filii quos dedit mihi Dominus.*

LXXIII

SHORT LIFE A GRACE.

Consummatus in brevi, explevit tempora multa.

That a short life may be a great grace, far from being opposed to, is altogether consonant with the view which makes length of days a grace. For it is not a privilege to be cut off soon, except it be "lest deceit should ensnare his soul"—which is at best a negative grace; or else because life, though short in days, is full and long in spiritual experience and insight. Human life is the life of the spirit, not of the animal; it is measured not by years, but by the amount of spiritual activity. *Cani sunt sensus hominis*, it is thought, and not grey hair that entitles old age to veneration. 2. *Explevit tempora multa*—the wares of the world have been passed over in rapid review, tried in the balance, one after another, and found wanting. And God has revealed His beauties in as fast a succession and has grown in lovableness, taking root in the heart and shooting up into an overshadowing tree, like the Prophet's gourd, in a brief night (*Sub umbra illius quem desideraveram sedi*). The writer of Ecclesiastes is intent on this theme, tasting ever more deeply of life's chalice, and forced to cry out after each brackish draught thereof. Who is like God? All is vanity, save to love God. Happy is the man who remembers his Creator in the days of his youth, albeit, that the God of our childish choice, the world of our childish re-

nunciation, are at best but shadowy ideas waiting for their body and fulness; but happier he who at the close of long years, perhaps after many wanderings and follies, knowing well the weight of every word, can say: What is like God? Happiest of all he who can say: "Thou hast been my God from my youth, and unto old age and grey hairs, forsake me not, O Lord my God!"

LXXIV.

NATURE SAVED IN GRACE.

Remittuntur ei peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum.

"Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much," and her sins were many, just because she loved much—too much. It is usually the same gifts which damns or saves us, according as it is ill or well used. Like every grace, it is *in resurrectionem* and *in ruinam*. Mary's gift was a power of passionate love. Her love of the Master was not another love succeeding the old; but the old love cleansed, restrained, lifted up, intensified. Nature is saved in grace. Everywhere it is the same; good and evil; better and worse; best and worst, treading on one another's heels. Greater force, if it swerves, means great ruin.

LXXV.

THE MINUTENESS OF GOD'S LOVE.

Capilli capitis vestri omnes numerati sunt, nolite timere.

"The hairs of your head are all counted. Do not be afraid." As the miser to whom every farthing

is as dear as his own miserable soul, gloats over each and says, "Mine, mine, all mine," so in God's no less incomprehensible, hungering love, every several hair of our head is known, weighed, numbered, and hoarded up as avariciously, as the foolish lover treasures next his heart the very straws trodden by his mistress' feet. *Nolite timere.*

LXXVI.

SEPARATION THE PROOF OF LOVE.

Veni separare hominem.

As love makes for the most perfect attainable oneness, so separation is the mortification of love—not its death, but its discipline and mortification. Its death perhaps, if it be worthless; and always the death of what is worthless or impure in it; therefore it is the purgation of imperfect love; the death of false love; the exercise and renewal of true love. *Et tui ipsius animam gladius pertransibit;* for even Mary's love had to know the sword of separation. Our Saviour came to kindle love upon earth, as it had never been kindled before, between man and man, and between man and God; yet He came to send, not peace, but a sword; not union, but division and separation.

LXXVII.

UNANIMITY.

Idem sapiatis, unanimes; id ipsum sentientes. Nihil per contentionem, neque per inanem gloriam.

"Let us all think and say the same thing," must not be understood of a wooden, unintelligent uniformity imposed from outside; but of the natural offspring of that unifying charity which should bind all members of the same body together; whether that body be the race, or the Church, or some closer corporation within the Church. Individualism bids us not to care a fig what others say or think, to "live and let live." So long as others do not interfere with us, let them do and believe as they please: *Quid ad nos; ipsi viderint.* Toleration, as at present misunderstood, means the indifference of systematic egoism. But unifying charity instinctively, and often consciously, endeavours to break down every wall of partition which severs soul from soul by diversity of belief or sentiment. The controversial spirit, or proselytizing instinct, is but a perversion of the deepest appetite of the rational soul, and points to the essential solidarity of the race. Union, in belief and thought, is the close ally of agreement in sentiment; which, in turn, is the only lasting basis of union and co-operation in action. Hence the stress laid on unity of faith by Christ and His Church. And the same principle is implied by the insistence on obedience of judgment as a condition of obedience in will and execution.

Yet were all this to be understood of verbal compliancy, it would mean the death, instead of the keenest life of the soul; the uniformity of blind traditionalism, the superstitious transmission of dead formulæ from mouth to mouth, and mind to mind. Whereas the keen, healthy appetite for being in intelligent sympathy with every other mind, spurs us on to the most intense activity of thought, that we may get to understand ourselves and to understand others. When we hear a statement which sounds strange to us, we are not indifferent, but sharply interested to know how the speaker understands it; what he has to say for it; whether we can in any way accept it, or interpret it benignly; or whether we have not after all been wrong ourselves; and if not, whether we can get the speaker to see where he is wrong and to accept what we believe right; or whether we can at least use the same words as he, though in a different sense; or hold the same truth, differing only in our expression of it. And it is only when agreement is evidently impossible that with great reluctance we agree to differ as a *dernier ressort*, regarding our disagreement as a misfortune in itself, and apart from all ulterior consequences. Such a union is necessarily of slow growth, even between individuals, not to say among masses of men; but it is none the less that goal for which our radical social instinct is making through devious ways. Nor is discussion; conducted in obedience to this spirit of unifying love, in any way hostile to peace and concord; or to be confounded with aggressive controversy and intolerance. For far from emphasizing or fostering

divergencies, it is as loth as possible to admit their existence, and hopes against hope that they may be more apparent than real. The controversial spirit is also begotten of a perverted desire for union in opinion and sentiment, but is egoistic, narrow, intolerant, unyielding; forcing others into agreement with itself; giving nothing, exacting everything; dogmatic, indocile; harsh and impatient; exaggerating differences; condemning, ridiculing, despising; indignant, not grieved. Yet as the perversion of what is good, it is better than the pseudo-tolerance of individualism—that growth of a cold, systematic selfishness and independence which suffers every man to go his own way, caring nothing whether it be to Heaven or to Hell. Nowhere, perhaps, has the true spirit been more happily embodied than in the proem to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: "It is presupposed that every good Christian will be more ready to agree with his neighbour's statement than to condemn it; and if he cannot see his way to this, let him inquire of him in what sense he takes it; and then if he means what is wrong, he is to be set right gently; and if that is not enough, one must try to get him round by every reasonable means." It is one thing to go about the world getting others to agree with oneself; another, to get them to agree with the truth. The controversialist prefers self to truth.

LXXVIII.

STIGMATA OF ST. FRANCIS.

Domine, quinque talenta tradidisti mihi: ecce alia quinque superlucratus sum.

"Lord, Thou gavest me five talents; see, here are five more!" Our wounds and sorrows are of all the talents committed to us the most precious. Lifted by them above the earth to the side of Christ crucified, we may draw all men unto ourselves, and through ourselves to God. Few saints in the calendar draw so widely as the loving St. Francis Assisi, with his wounded hands and feet and heart, and his gentle, sensitive spirit formed for the acutest suffering and compassion.

LXXIX.

THE LIFE OF PRAISE.

Homo creatus est ut laudet.

"Man was created to praise." A life of praise ought not to be a very sad or gruesome prospect. It means a life devoted to the study of what is highest and most beautiful, a life of ever-growing appreciation and love, as our taste becomes formed and refined and sensitive to more exquisite and subtle beauties than before. It is a life by consequence of absorbing enthusiasm; for no one is content to love alone, but must drag every one up to his own level and into sympathy with himself. A saint who is not a propagandist is unthinkable. *Genitori, Genitoque, laus et jubilatio*, this is the whole duty of man upon

earth as in Heaven. *Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te, gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.* Surely not a wholly unattractive vocation, or a very disagreeable task! There is something that we have got to understand and love, and praise, and get others to praise.

LXXX.

OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESS.

Et viso illo, præterivit.

"And when he saw him, he passed on." No doubt this good priest would have done something for the wounded man had he been in his district, but the interference would perhaps be keenly resented by the parish priest. The levite not being in Holy Orders would by no means trespass on the special preserves and privileges of the priesthood. But this outlandish Samaritan knows nothing about rights and privileges and jurisdiction and prescription, and, on the mere title of common humanity, thrusts himself into other people's concerns instead of minding his own business. *Vade tu et fac similiter;* —though *similiter* requires true parity of circumstances. It is well to mind one's own business; yet not so as to forget St. Paul's words: "Considering, not each his own concerns, but the concerns of others."

LXXXI.

RATIONAL PIETY.

Sanctifica eos in veritate; sermo tuus veritas.

"Sanctify them in Thy truth, Thy word is truth." Sanctification which does not rest upon solid truth, cannot hold out against the tempest and the flood. Every plantation which truth has not planted, shall be torn up by the roots. *Sermo tuus veritas, i.e.*, God's utterances, through reason and revelation, are the rocks about which the roots of sanctity must wrap themselves. Of two evils, better to have the foundation without the superstructure, than the loftiest pile unfounded or ill-founded—the loftier, the worse. Some well-meaning persons think it a profanation to bring to ascetic teaching the touchstone of reason and consistency; or to suppose for an instant that the maxims of holy people can ever embody pernicious and soul-destroying fallacies. Ignatius of Loyola thought far otherwise. A man may be an admirable artist, though an execrable art-critic; and conversely.

LXXXII.

THE SACRED HEART.

Benignitas et humanitas apparuit Salvatoris nostri Dei.

It can hardly be doubted that in some special way it has been intrusted to the Church of our day

to develope, by the ordinary tedious processes, the idea of the human-heartedness of God. Her bitter conflict with Jansenism and her zeal in promoting the devotion to the Sacred Heart are from one and the same seed of fire. There is yet much straw and stubble to burn up, much dross to purge away, before the pure, fine gold can be separated and secured. The impurities of rigorism and manicheism, which cling like parasites to the truth, cannot be shaken off in a moment; and the most earnest apostles of the *benignitas et humanitas* of our Saviour, will at times commit themselves to utterances at discord with their gospel, so that we find the anti-Jansenist often tinged with Jansenism. But all this is strictly in accord with those necessary laws which govern the conception and birth of truth. It is only after many, but ever-lessening oscillations between vicious extremes, that the needle at last comes to rest and points true to the pole.

LXXXIII.

RESTRAINT, THE CONDITION OF GROWTH.

Omnis autem disciplina in præsenti quidem videtur non esse gaudii sed mœroris; postea autem fructum pacatissimum reddet.

"I came that they might have life, and might have it more abundantly;"—for if self-abnegation, restraint, mortification, is the condition on which we follow Christ, it is only because without them we cannot enter into that fuller life of the intellect, heart, and affections, by which we recover a hundred-fold in the present, whatever we seem to

sacrifice. Only through Him can the human faculties receive their full expansion and development. Without the cross the downward path to selfishness and cruelty is only too easy. Our power of loving is lost by reckless dissipation, and the mind loosed from the rock of faith, drifts out into the darkness. *Nonne Deo subjecta erit anima mea.* Shall not my soul, therefore, be subjected to God?

LXXXIV.

SILENT PRAYER.

Scit enim Pater vester quid opus sit vobis antequam petatis eum.

"He feedeth the young ravens that call upon Him," and "the lion-whelps roaring for their prey, begging their food from God, . . . all wait for Thee that Thou mayest give them meat in due season." If the blind, natural cravings which He Himself has implanted; if the brute cries of pain and hunger ascend up as a prayer in the ears of God; shall not the very needs of man's soul be eloquent without words, before Him "to whom all hearts are opened, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid," and from whom alone come all our good desires and prayers. "Lord, Thou knowest my desire," says David, "and my groaning is not hid from Thee." "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." Doubtless the 'externation' of our prayers and desires is natural, and is expected from us so far as possible. But it is not always possible; and then it is well to remember that every God-given desire of our heart,

however latent and remote from present consciousness, still more every felt need and hunger of spirit, rises like the incense of an unceasing prayer before God's mercy-seat, "the Spirit Itself helping our infirmities, making intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered."

LXXXV

THE FOLLY OF DIVINE LOVE.

Neque mittatis margaritas vestras ante porcos.

By love, St. Ignatius tells us, a man gives *himself* so far as it is possible; and in seeking to be re-loved he seeks that another shall make to him a like self-offering. Thus love is unitive in that it tends to obliterate the lines which divide *me* and *thee*, *mine* and *thine:* "all mine is thine and all thine is mine." But love is of itself indifferent till we know the nature of the lover, or, what is correlative, the motive of his love. A self-offering is valued according to our estimate of the self which is offered. That God has so loved us, and given Himself to us, will move us just so far as we have learnt to realize what He is in Himself who has done so much for us. Wisdom and self-respect forbid us to reveal in its fulness an affection we may feel for another; but tell us rather to deal it out gradually as it is valued and asked for; lest we seem to force a return, which is gratitude rather than love—a puzzled sense of obligation for a costly gift hardly understood or cared for. But God's love of the soul is too passionate to be so politic·

He flings Himself at our feet, a pearl before swine; and we receive His protestations of love with embarrassment or indifference—perhaps even a certain sense of annoyance: "What have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come here to torment us?" We prefer to live among the tombs.

LXXXVI.

NO WASTE OF GOOD DESIRES.

Quod egredietur de ore meo non revertetur ad me vacuum.

Every drop which the sun's heat draws up from the earth, falls back to earth in fertilizing rain, yet not necessarily, if ever, on the same spot. God's winds carry it hither and thither, resolved into vapour, broken up, dispersed in a thousand directions. Yet sooner or later it returns whence it came. And so of every good desire or prayer or effort elicited from our heart by that love which is the one secret cause of all good. It is an energy set free that can never be ultimately lost or destroyed. It may fail of the end to which we direct it, but only because it cannot fail of that higher and wider end to which it is directed by an all-seeing eye, an omnipotent and unerring hand.

LXXXVII.

PEACE.

Et in terra pax.

"And on earth peace." Internal peace of soul is undoubtedly the very finish of sanctification, and

the final fruit of the Incarnation. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." Peace is not only compatible with the sword, with tribulation, temptation, and external conflict, but needs these as conditions of its exercise. Else it is latent. It is therefore self-possession; the being master of one's soul in the midst of suffering and anxiety. It is not the peace of inactivity or death; but of a strong government holding a mighty people in sway. Who does not know the awful power of the statesman or general who keeps calm, self-possessed, recollected, when all around are panic-stricken, clamorous, distracted; who moves quietly, noiselessly, surely, to his end, with the momentum of weight rather than of speed. It is the imperturbable calm begotten by the sense of power and security, even like the everlasting "peace of God which passeth all understanding;" the calm of an intellect stilled by faith, where doubts and difficulties are but as cloud-shadows flitting across the unruffled surface of its placid depths; the calm of affections and passions not deadened, but strengthened by the domination of Divine Love: the calm of a conscience clear as the purest crystal; the calm of outward bearing and conduct where every movement has been brought into subjection to the law within. Peace is therefore the child of true magnanimity.

LXXXVIII.

ONE BREAD AND ONE BODY.

Unus panis, unum corpus multi sumus, omnes qui de uno pane participamus.

"For we being many, are one Bread and one Body, all who eat of that Bread." To eat at the same table and off the same dish, to break bread with another is, especially in the East, a pledge and symbol of brotherhood, of a common parentage and source of life. In the Eucharistic Communion it is no symbol, but an ultra-reality. Two brothers do not live by the same life in so high a sense as two souls who live by the indwelling of one and the same Christ, one and the same Spirit in both. The symbol indeed is broken and divided that it may be distributed among many; but those many are united and merged into one another by assimilation to the one indivisible Reality; the one Bread and one Body. We being many, draw to ourselves the symbol and absorb it. The Reality, being one, draws us to Itself and absorbs us. There is no embrace of souls so close or so loving as that whereby both are melted into the soul of Christ; no kiss of peace more infinitely tender—or else more infinitely treacherous. Let a man prove himself, and so let him eat; lest, not discerning the mystical union of Christ's Body, he eat to his own damnation with hatred in his heart.

LXXXIX

FAITH.

Super hanc petram ædificabo ecclesiam meam.

Jacob laid his weary head to rest on a pillow of stone and beheld Heaven's secrets in a vision; for God was in that place though he knew it not. And he called it Beth-el, the house of God. It is on the hard and seemingly comfortless rock of faith that our thought-wearied intellect must repose, if we are to wake inwardly to the vision of angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man, that ladder which restores commerce between heaven and earth and whose foot rests in Bethel, the Church of God.

XC.

GOD'S VENGEANCE.

Donec ponam inimicos tuos scabellum pedum tuorum.

"Till I make Thy enemies Thy footstool." God triumphs over His enemies by the power of love, which turns them into friends, and servants of the servants of God; ministering to His wounded feet; supporting and giving rest to His little ones—to His lowliest members; beneath the feet of all by the voluntary abjection of enslaving love. "From the moment she entered she hath not ceased to kiss My feet."

XCI.

GOD'S GARMENT.

Si tetigero tantum vestimentum ejus salva ero.

Heaven and earth "shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them." For they are the very garments of God; not His substance; no part of Him, as pantheism would have it. Yet there is nothing more nearly enters into our personality, than our garments; so nearly are they related to us. Who does not feel humbled by rude and shabby attire; and exalted by that which is becoming? Our garments hide us, but they also reveal us, as our words do. They are a language in themselves, a self-utterance. They reveal our very outline and movements; and are instinct with our life. So everywhere Scripture represents Nature as the garment of God; as the guise in which He has chosen to walk and talk with man upon earth. It is God who shines in the sun, moon, and stars; who rages in the storm; who consumes in the fire; who thunders from the clouds; who clothes Himself in glorious apparel; girds Himself with strength; robes Himself in light; veils Himself in the clouds. "Hast thou an arm like God; or can'st thou thunder with a voice like His; compass thyself with beauty, and be lifted up on high, and be glorious as He, and put on the garments of splendour?" Nature, then, is the garment of God; and by the light of natural reason, and the impulse of the natural heart, man can draw near from behind,

and touch with trembling hope the fringe of His vesture, and be healed of his infirmities. But grace calls such men of good-will to behold the very face of God, and to fall at His feet, glorying in their infirmities.

XCII.

BLESSED MARGARET MARY.

Simile est regnum cœlorum homini quærenti bonas margaritas et inventa una pretiosa (Margarita), vendidit omnia quæ habuit et comparavit eam.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a man seeking goodly pearls, and having found one of great price, he sold all that he had and bought it." Blessed Margaret stands as representative of the Soul of Man which God sought through all the long days of creation, as a prize to be reached through many labours. When He had breathed the immortal spirit into its prepared habitation of clay, God rested from His labour. *Inveni quem diligit anima mea.* He had found what He could love, and what could love Him in return. Again when that pearl of great price was lost, He sought it afresh where it lay hidden away in the dust. He sold all that He had; He emptied Himself of His glory; and having given all He had, it only remained that He should give Himself; and so He took the very Heart of His bosom, and gave that too. "Behold this Heart which has so loved man."

XCIII.

OUR TIMES.

Loquere ad cor populi hujus.

"Speak to the heart of this people." *Cor ad cor loquitur*—"It is the heart that speaks to the heart." We must speak from the abundance of our own heart if we are to reach the hearts of others. Else we may enlighten or interest, but we cannot move. To speak to the heart of this generation we must know its heart, how it thinks and how it loves, its lights and its shadows, its depths and its shallows, its strength and its weakness, its greatness and its smallness. And where it is most wanting, there our own hearts must be most full, great, deep, strong, enlightened. To know it, we must observe it, and study it. It is not enough to know truth; we must know error as well —the pathology of human mind. We come to the task mostly as a physician who has never seen the human frame, or its morbid state, except in a diagram. He talks learnedly of what he has never seen, never handled, never felt; and no one listens to him.

XCIV.

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

Discipulus ille quem diligebat Jesus.

"The disciple whom Jesus loved, who also leaned upon His breast at supper." Even were the first designation not distinctive, but common, the second cannot be so explained; and since they are here connected, it follows that *quem diligebat Jesus*, is true of St. John in a peculiar

sense, not common to all—as indeed the definite article everywhere seems to imply. Were the epithet self-concealing, St. John would have said, "another disciple," or "one of those whom Jesus loved." In this case, as certainly in the case of Lazarus, our Saviour makes His own, and thereby sanctifies, the relation of human and natural friendship—one which is capable of indefinite elevation on the one hand, or corruption on the other; and which, though in some respects less sacred and divine in its nature than the relations consequent on parental, filial, fraternal, or conjugal love; yet in point of its freedom and the purity of its foundation may often be a truer image of the Divine passion for the human soul, or of that one love by which the Three Divine Persons are knit together.

That our Saviour should have loved the twelve equally is a preposterous supposition, quite adverse to the whole doctrine of God's freedom in distributing His graces. "Is thine eye evil because I am good," *i.e.*, Am I to complain because God is more generous to others, and to forget that He has been generous to me beyond all desert? What He loves in us are His own gifts and likenesses; and these He imparts alike in no two cases; so that He loves no two alike. It is only from an idea that fraternal love is wholly extrinsic, that the unnatural and unworkable notion could have arisen that Christian perfection bids us regard all with strict equality of affection. For indeed if, in each case, we love not our neighbour at all, but God only of whom he is the mere representative, the fetich, the arbitrary symbol,

then it is always one and the same act of love; and it is indifferent whether God bids us love a stock or a stone, or a brute or a man. God wants us not only to love Him, but also to love what He loves, and for the same reason that He loves it; to love in sympathy with Him, as far as we can at all see with His eyes. What He loves in each is His own image, which indeed is common to all, in so far as all have reasonable souls; and His own likeness, in so far as many have supernatural grace as well. But over and above this, He imparts His image and likeness with endless diversity in both orders, by natural and supernatural gifts. To see God in others is to ascribe all that is good in them to this Divine indwelling, which is more in some, in others less. They are lovable because God loves them and "has done great things for them;" more for some; less for others; much for all.

XCV.

ILLIBERAL JUDGMENTS.

Quid est homo, ut immaculatus sit?

There is nothing more illiberal than the way in which we allow our likes and dislikes to be ruled by the principle, *Malum ex quocunque defectu*—"Good, implies every perfection; bad, but a single defect;" so that ten good points in a character are blotted out of sight by a single fault, or even less than a fault. We seem to take a man's goodness as a matter of course, and no thanks to him; as the mere negation of blameworthiness. It may be partly that we notice what is peculiar and rivet our attention on

it; whereas what we find in every one is too ordinary to strike us; just as the ordinary benefits and blessings of daily life, in themselves very great, and in number beyond reckoning, escape our observation and elicit no gratitude. It is the function of the best poetry and art to re-sensitize our attention, and to teach us to observe the beauties of those ordinary things and persons which are continually before our irresponsive, use-worn gaze. It is the function of charity to open our eyes to the image of God in others; to reveal them to us as they are in His eyes, finite and faulty, needing like ourselves much patient compassion; and yet full of goodness, if not in act, at least in capacity.

XCVI.

GOD AT OUR MERCY.

Factus sum sicut homo sine adjutorio.

The Infant Saviour at the breast of His Mother or in the arms of St. Joseph tells us how God comes to us in weakness; throws Himself upon our mercy; makes Himself needy and dependent that our love may have room to exercise itself in His regard. In every grace which He offers us, He exposes His honour to the insult of refusal; in the Eucharist and other sacraments, to profanation and sacrilege; in His Church and in His "little ones," to persecution, neglect, and contempt. He trusts Himself into the hands of Judas, no less than into those of Joseph.

XCVII.

CONDITIONS OF PRAYER.

Nihil solliciti sitis, sed in omni oratione et obsecratione cum gratiarum actione petitiones vestræ innotescant apud Deum.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in all prayer and entreaty, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." Here are all the requisites of successful prayer—"Ye ask and ye receive not, because ye ask not aright." First, we are to ask "without anxiety;" not but that we are to care about having what we ask for. We must want it intensely, and the more the better; else how can we pray with fervour? The prayers that our Saviour heard and blessed were like His own, "strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him," in His agony and conflict with the horror of death. It was no listless, half-hearted cry that was uttered by the Syrophœnician woman; or by the blind man at Jericho; or by the Centurion; or by the leper; or by Mary and Martha. Anxiety means fear as to the result. We are forbidden to fear, when we have done all in our power, *i.e.*, when we have used all reasonable means; and foremost amongst them is strong, earnest prayer, by which we draw down from Heaven rain to fertilize what we have sown in the way of efforts, which else were sown in vain. Prayer is one of the engines by which the Kingdom of Heaven is to be stormed. God loves the violence that storms at Him and will take no refusal—

Fervent love
And lively hope with violence assail
The Kingdom of the Heavens, and overcome
The will of the Most High; not in such sort
As man prevails o'er man, but conquers it
Because 'tis willing to be conquered—still
Though conquered, by its mercy conquering.[1]

The will to pray is always from God, and it is a pledge of His willingness to hear if we but pray aright—that is, with confidence and pertinacity. Never yet has a prayer fallen to the ground that went up from a desirous heart. It may be after many days that the bread cast on the water returns; but in God's scheme there is no destruction of force; every good effort, every good wish is fruitful in the event. *Cum gratiarum actione*—"With thanksgiving." This is the last condition for successful impetration; inseparable from hope and the sense of dependence on God alone. To acknowledge that all we have received in the past is from God, is to proclaim that we look to Him alone for the future.

XCVIII.

CONSERVATION OF SPIRITUAL ENERGY.

Mitte panem tuum super transeuntes aquas, quia post tempora multa invenies illum.

"Cast thy bread upon the water, and after many days thou shalt find it," *i.e.*, alms wasted on the most worthless and undeserving, will in the end return with interest into the bosom of the giver, "good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over." There is no waste of matter or force in physical Nature, except to our seeming; all is collected up again to the minutest fragment and

[1] Cary's Dante. *Par.* xx.

stored away in her treasury for future use. So in God's supernatural or moral Providence no good desire was ever in vain or fruitless. It is like the Divine Word which shall not return empty, but shall accomplish all whereunto it was sent. If our prayers or well-intended efforts seem misdirected and fruitless in the present; yet their force is indestructible, and after many days the wasted bread shall be recovered again. If it delay, wait for it, for surely it shall come, and will not tarry.

The only remedy to the pessimism engendered, not by the wickedness and weakness of the world, but by the present disappointing results of a scheme of salvation professing to be divine, and by the unsatisfactoriness of a solution purporting to be from God, is to be found in this virtue of expectant hope. The bright side of Christianity is all in the future; its dark phase in the present. *Expecto resurrectionem mortuorum et vitam futuri sæculi.* Redemption and light is *in fieri*, not in *facto esse*—only in process of becoming. We are in this respect, like the Old Testament saints, "saluting the promises from afar." Our eyes have seen the day-star rising in the east, "setting forth as a bridegroom from his chamber;" but He has yet to run His course, before all His enemies shall be under His feet. There is really no human or natural basis for even a modified optimism; nothing but a *Credo quia impossibile.* Hope is the light that shines in the tearful eyes of the saints; like the first glimmer of dawn reflected in eyes that "watch for the morning." *Deus, Deus meus, ad te de luce vigilo.*

XCIX.

MARY AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine.

As in the beginning it was the Spirit that brooded over the abyss, and brought form out of the formless, order from confusion, life from death, light from darkness; so in the beginning of the new heaven and earth, the same Spirit—*Digitus Paternæ dexteræ*—"Finger of the Father's right hand," was instrumental in realizing the Incarnate Word conceived and uttered by the Eternal Father: *Dixitque Deus: Fiat Lux, et facta est Lux*—"God said: Let there be Light, and Light was." And as It began, so It continues to develope the seed sown, "which is the Word of God;" and to work out day by day, and in each single soul, the Mystic Christ, *i.e.*, Christ and the Church, "unto the stature of the perfect man." To judge of this new creation, we need to go forward to the end and look back upon it with God's eyes: "*Viditque Deus cuncta quæ fecerat; et erant valde bona. Igitur perfecti sunt cœli et terra et omnis ornatus eorum*—"And God saw all that He had made; and it was very good. And so the heavens and the earth and all their furniture were perfected." In the finished Christ the labour of the Holy Spirit will come to an end. "The Spirit of God shall come to rest upon Him." Of that finished work it is said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." "I saw the heavens opened and the Spirit of God in the form of a Dove descending and *resting* upon Him,"

i.e., as a dove in its finished nest. "And God rested the seventh day from all His labour that He had wrought."

Ex Maria Virgine. As Mary was co-principle with the Holy Spirit "in the beginning" of the New Creation, so is the Church in the process of its evolution and its consummation. Her office throughout is the same: *ancilla Domini*—"God's handmaiden." The Holy Ghost is ever coming upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowing her, and that Holy Thing which is called the Son of God, the Mystic Christ, being born of her. She is mother and the nurse of redeemed humanity; she is ever standing with helpless man in her arms, and her foot upon the serpent's head; Michael and his angels fighting for the "Woman and her Child," against the dragon and his angels.

C.

SEEING IS BELIEVING.

Affer manum tuam et mitte in latus meum, et noli esse incredulus.

"Reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless but believing." *Modicæ fidei quare dubitasti?* Why do you doubt My love, My wisdom, My power? Is it because, unless you see signs and wonders, you think that My arm is shortened? and unless you see the solution of every problem, the exit of every event, you think that My devices are exhausted? or unless you actually behold and touch the wound love has inflicted on Me, you deem that My love is spent and cooled? "Reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless but believing." *Palpate et videte*—"Handle Me and see."

CI.

WORDLESS PRAYERS.

Desiderium pauperum exaudivit Dominus, præparationem cordis eorum exaudivit auris tua.

"The Lord has heard the desire of the poor; Thine ear has caught what his heart was making ready to say." We are anxious in praying to find words adequate and fitted to our thoughts and desires; but how needlessly! This is an anthropomorphic fallacy which figures God as needing information. True, He may require some externation or utterance, for our sakes. Yet what matters it whether the words be those of the *Pater* and *Ave;* or a striking of the breast, or any act, even internal, which says, "Lord, Thou knowest my desire, and my groaning is not hid from Thee"? He *hears* our very wish, the very state of a ready heart: *Cui omne cor patet et omnis voluntas loquitur* —"For to Him every heart lies open, every wish is eloquent;"—even our most deeply buried, barely subconscious, or interpretative intentions.

CII

HOLY INNOCENTS.

Princeps pacis.

"The Prince of peace." He comes to send, not peace, but a sword—a sword for Rachael's heart, for His own Mother's heart; a sword for the helpless and innocent; to break many a heart, that the thoughts of many a heart may be revealed.

Peace therefore is the issue, or last event; but strife is the road to it. There are those who calumniate our Lord as indifferent to all this heart-breaking which salvation involves from the necessity of the case. Comprehending the measureless glory and joy to come, He must be—some would think—insensible to sorrows which, compared with that joy, are infinitesimal. But compared with our littleness and weakness, He knows that they are overwhelming and crushing. *Sicut pater castigat* —"He chastises as a Father." He does not afflict us willingly; what He *could* spare us, He *has* spared us, and has borne it Himself; the slight remainder that we must bear, afflicts Him more than it afflicts us. "If one member suffers, all the other members suffer with it," but most of all, the Head. He who gives us our tenderest feelings, feels more tenderly for them and with them, than any fellow-mortal, however sympathetic. He can console and compensate as none other; nor is any pain so slight, not even that of the humblest sentient creature that crawls upon the earth, that He should be indifferent to it.

CIII.

EARTH'S RENEWAL.

Rorate cœli desuper, et nubes pluant justum: aperiatur terra et germinet Salvatorem.

"Shed your dews from above, O ye heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth break and the Saviour bud forth." Heaven and earth co-operate in the birth of the New Spring; the Spirit coming down like the dew upon Mary, a daughter of earth, from whose fertilized womb appears the first harbinger of the world's renewal, "as a tender plant and as a root out of the dry ground." *Emitte Spiritum tuum et creabuntur, et renovabis faciem terræ*—"Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created, and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth." *Jam hiems transiit*—already the winter is past, the winter of earth's sin and darkness and frosty hardness; the dead, stubborn, fruitless soil is loosened and quickened by the soft, warm rain; "the fig-tree hath put forth her blossoms, and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in the land." The winter was past in that moment when the earth opened and the Saviour budded forth; but the spring had only begun, and summer was yet in the distance; and autumn, with its harvest-homes and golden store, still further off. But from dawn to sunset, from the beginning to the fulness of the renewal, there are the same two co-operant principles of life—the dew from heaven and the fruitful earth; the Spirit and the Virgin-Mother of Divine grace,—the second Eve,

Mother of all living. In every act of sanctification, whether it be first conversion, or increase of grace, Christ is born again of Mary and the Spirit, *i.e.*, His image and likeness, how distant and defective soever, is multiplied in those to whom He has given "power to become the sons of God:" *Ejus divinitatis esse consortes qui humanitatis nostræ fieri dignatus est particeps*—"To be consorts of His Godhead who deigned to be a sharer of our manhood." And so that first "tender shoot" of salvation sends forth from its root new fibres, and spreads secretly underground, till the whole face of the earth is renewed and covered with what seems to surface-sight a multitude of single growths, but what penetrating faith knows to be "one body and one spirit," one living, many-branched whole, one mystic Christ, the fruit of Mary's womb.

Rorate cœli desuper—"Shed your dew from on high, O heavens." The Divinity rests upon the Sacred Humanity, as the dew upon the leaves and in the flower-cups; not mingled with it, nor absorbed, yet giving it a glory and brilliancy which is not its own, but from on high,—*Desuper*. There alone does it rest, firmly and for ever, in such sort that the jewels and their setting are but one Holy Thing (*illud Sanctum quod ex te nascetur*). On all others the diamond fringe hangs trembling—a rude touch, and lo! "the glory is departed"

CIV.

FEAR NOT.

Et timuerunt timore magno.

"And they (the Shepherds) were sore afraid." Such is the natural effect on man of any revelation of an unknown, uncertain power, until he has received assurance that its possessor is well-disposed towards him, and will use it for his help and not for his hurt. Then fear gives way to confidence. Before the Incarnation had made God's love visible and tangible, men would not, perhaps could not, believe in it, or trust Him. If they trembled and were sore afraid at the brightness of His angels, much less could they endure His very face and presence, and live. "Speak thou unto us; but let not the Lord speak to us, lest we die." But now, it is not Moses, but God Himself who speaks to us with human words and broken utterances; who touches us with a human hand; upon whose human face our eyes may rest undazzled. *Quod fuit ab initio; quod audivimus; quod vidimus oculis nostris, quod perspeximus et manus nostræ contrectaverunt de Verbo Vitæ*—"We have seen; we have heard; we have handled That which was from the beginning —The Word of Life."

"Fear not, for behold, I bring you glad tidings." This was the new evangel, that the dispensation of fear should give place to that of love, that man should be fearless not only before the angels, but before the God and King of Angels, in whose sight

the angels tremble and veil their faces. Not that they should think less of the power and majesty of God, but that they should have an irresistible assurance that that power is for their help and not for their hurt; that it is wielded by mercy and love; that His thoughts towards us are not of affliction but of peace.

"This shall be a sign." This is the symbol of the Gospel spirit that banishes fear or purifies it into reverential love and chaste familiarity. "You shall find the Babe," for He comes not in mature manhood as the first Adam, but as one born of woman, in the humiliation of infancy, dependent on others for food, shelter, clothing, and protection—He who "feeds the young ravens which cry unto Him" and "shelters us under the shadow of His wing," and "clothes the grass of the field," and "is the protector of all them that call upon Him." This He suffers, that He may become one of us in everything, and eliminate every line of separation, sin only excepted, which could hinder our free and ready access to our Emmanuel (*i.e.*, God, one of ourselves)—"wrapped in swaddling-clothes," *i.e.*, tied hand and foot, so as to be able neither to fight nor to flee; entirely at the mercy of His creatures. "Laid in a manger," in that which by its nature was never intended, and could never be fitted to be the resting-place of the "Son of Man;" but "not having where to lay His Head," He must perforce seek shelter in our rough hearts rather than

be altogether unloved and left out in the cold. If there is nothing else in that place, there is at least room for Him.

Keble notices that the angel choirs were silent till they heard the sign, and then it was that their praises broke out like a pent-up flood:

> But when they heard the sign where Christ should be
> In sudden light they shone and heavenly harmony,

i.e., it is the revelation of "omnipotence in bonds;" of the tyranny of infinite love over infinite majesty, that banishes fear and gives birth to peace on earth, wherein and whence God is glorified in the heights. "Fear not, for . . . there is born to you this day a Saviour" and not a Judge, *i.e.*, a Judge reluctantly and in the last extremity; a Saviour primarily and by preference; "longsuffering and slow to anger;" putting off the evil day, age after age; hoping against hope that man may turn to Him; one who, in a sense, mourns over loved lost souls for ever and ever. "O Absalom, my son, my son; would God that I had died for thee," and "How often would I have gathered thee under My wing and thou wouldst not," and "O that thou hadst known and in this thy day, the things of thy peace." It is in the Eucharist that this mystery of condescension culminates—the Babe, wrapped in swaddling-clothes, laid in a manger. *Hoc erit signum vobis.* Here is the sign of God's good-will that banishes fear.

CV.

CONTROVERSY.

Fortis ut mors, dilectio.

"Love as invincible as death." *Diligite inimicos vestros*—"Love your enemies." The shortest road to victory over the enemies of God is that of personal kindness; and as regards their opinions, a sympathy not of approbation, but of comprehension; a glad insistence on points of agreement, a calm steadfastness against error—free from all heat, bitterness, and personal estrangement. *Rationes modeste afferantur eo animo ut suus veritati sit locus non ut in ea re superiores videantur*—"Let the reasons be adduced quietly with a mind to truth, and not to victory;" says St. Ignatius Loyola. Nothing, could be further removed from the narrow, sectarian, unchristian spirit of controversy, such as disgraces the pages of many Church-papers, periodicals, controversial tracts and treatises. *Nescitis cujus spiritus estis*—"Ye know not whose school ye are of," Christ would say to such as would bid fire come down from heaven to destroy their enemies, and the enemies of God. He who had come "not to destroy men's souls, but to save them," bade another fire come down upon His enemies, the pentecostal fire, which He came to send upon earth, and was straitened till it was kindled; that love which even the heathen Akbar saw to be "the net of truth and the noose of God."

> And was not Allah called
> In old Irân, the Sun of Love. And Love
> The net of Truth?

CVI.

HOPE.

Etiamsi occiderit me in ipso sperabo.

Perhaps in the rapid narration of Job's many afflictions we are apt to miss the lesson of his protracted longsuffering, and to regard his successive blows collectively as one. We should space them out, and consider how, after the first, he gradually reconciled himself to God's will, and was full of confidence that He who had afflicted would presently heal and console him; and lo! instead of consolation, comes another blow harder and seemingly less deserved than the first. Will he still hope? will he still say to his friends, "Wait, and see the deliverance of God"? And so although, time after time, his hopes of speedy deliverance are frustrated, we find him as hopeful as ever, even though death, which to the Oriental mind is the culmination of evil, stares him in the face. "Though He slay me," *i.e.*, though He cut off my last hope, "yet will I hope in Him," —hoping, because it is hopeless.

CVII.

HELL, A MYSTERY.

Justice, the founder of my fabric moved;
To rear me was the task of Power divine,
Supremest Wisdom and primeval Love.[1]

Power, Wisdom, and Love are appropriated to the Three Divine Persons, and yet, taken essentially,

[1] Cary's Dante, *Hell*, iii.

are almost integrating parts of our notion of perfection. Power alone: or Wisdom alone, or Love alone is wanting and worthless. Wisdom with Power, but without Love, were attributes of a Demon. Love with Power and without Wisdom, were futile and mischievous; Love and Wisdom without Power, were ineffectual and helpless. May we say that the Three Divine Persons, or personal and relative perfections, are in some analogous way very complementary one of another; or rather, must we not say so? Hell, as Dante boldly affirms, is a monument not only of the power and the wisdom but of the love of God, *i.e.*, of that same Spirit which brought day out of darkness, and order out of ruin and confusion. *Giustizia mosse 'l mio alto fattore*, he says: justice was the motive, iniquity the occasion; but given the occasion, not only justice, but wisdom and love demanded it. We must not regard Hell as an arbitrary, but as a strictly necessary consequence of sin; or, at the most, determined in some way by the free-will of God, as to the particular mode of punishment. To understand the justice, wisdom, or love, which made Hell, is most certainly beyond our present ken. To our limited view, Hell, as we conceive it, may seem unjust, unwise, unloving; and attempts to justify it from reason, valid or invalid, may sometimes only irritate and disgust us. There is a certain presumption in the notion of any man seeing in his fellow-sinner such an abyss of iniquity, as could demand eternal and immeasurable torments; nor do I envy the man, intellectually or morally, who could find repose in

any rationalistic explanation of so great a mystery. Here, if anywhere, we must fall back upon the very notion of faith, as an heroic clinging to God in spite of crushing difficulties; in spite of all that may appear most contrary to our rooted conviction as to His goodness and mercy. It is just the way we ourselves should try the faith of one to whom we had already given abundant proof of our good-will; or as, for example, God tried the faith of the Israelites in the desert time after time—hiding Himself from them for a moment, to see if perchance even yet they had learnt to trust Him. "He who made the eye, shall He Himself not see?" and He that made the human heart, and bore a human heart, with all its tenderness and compassion, and fierce indignation against cruel injustice, shall He not be fair, and just, and kind, and tender? He who makes my very soul revolt against my own silly understanding of the doctrine of Hell and predestiny; shall He not prove true, and just, and wise, and loving, beyond my wildest dreams of goodness? Eventually I shall surely see how all that was revealed was true; but so far short of the whole truth as to make my present judgment on it worthless and vain. I am content therefore to wait patiently and trustfully as for the answer to a riddle, which now puzzles me hopelessly because I am on the wrong track for its solution; the more I reason, the faster I stick in the mire. When I hear the answer I shall laugh and say, "Of course! How could it be otherwise?"

But soon as in this Heaven his doubting eyes
Were opened, Gregory at his error smiled.[1]

CVIII.

UNCLOUDED SIGHT.

Si oculus tuus fuerit simplex, totum corpus tuum lucidum erit.

"If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." The "conscience argument" like its ally, the "æsthetic argument" for Christianity, appeals only to those whose sense of right and moral beauty is clear. If I find a key that fits an infinitely complicated lock, I cannot in prudence doubt that it is (directly or indirectly) the work of the locksmith. Christianity is the key that fits in thus exactly with the complicated wards of the highly developed conscience and moral sense, and that opens out the secrets of the human heart. It is therefore evidently from Him who makes and perfects the conscience and the heart. But when the still, clear waters of the lake become turbid and ruffled; when the heart is full of bitterness, rancour, or pride, weighed earthwards, tempted, depressed; then our sight is clouded to the truth; Christ no longer speaks clearly to us, nor is there remedy save in the prudence which tells us to wait patiently till the day break and the shadows flee away. Experience teaches us at least to recognize our transitory states as such; to distinguish the normal from the abnormal, the healthy from the morbid.

[1] Cary's Dante, *Par.* xxviii.

CIX.

OUR GRIEVANCES.

Intra tua vulnera absconde me.

"Within Thy Wounds hide me." The cure for self-concentration and all morbid dwelling on our own wounds, our own grievances, injuries, sorrows, temptations, scruples, is to fly from ourselves and hide away in the wounds of Christ's Mystical Body; to concentrate all on the sorrows, wrongs, and trials of others, to minister to them, pouring in oil and wine. Thus losing ourselves we shall find ourselves, *et sanitas tua citius orietur*[1]—and we shall be healed the sooner; for the more we dwell upon His wounds, the more He will dwell upon ours.

CX.

HERO-WORSHIP.

Illic (in cedris Libani) passeres nidificabunt. Montes excelsi cervis.

"In the cedars of Lebanon the sparrows shall nest." "The very finest tree in the whole forest, with the straightest stem, and the strongest arms, and the thickest foliage, wherein you choose to build . . . may be marked, for what you know, and may be down with a crash erelong."[2] A warning against giving to the greatest saints, lights, and pillars of the Church that blind confidence and implicit faith of which God is so jealous. It is the error of little and weak souls (*passeres*) to fly to

[1] Isaias lviii. 8. [2] *Vanity Fair.*

the cedar instead of to the mountain. "I saw Lucifer as lightning fall from Heaven." "How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, son of the morning." *Melius est confidere in Domino quam sperare in principibus*—"Better to trust in God than to trust in princes"—and therefore the stronger and wiser souls take refuge in the Rock alone, nor are they surprised, however grieved, at the crash of the cedar, knowing how its strong heart can be secretly rotted away to dust, while its outward seeming is unchanged.

CXI.

NATURAL KINDNESS.

Domine, quando te vidimus esurientem ?

"Lord, when saw we Thee hungry, and fed Thee?" The just seem to have been as unconscious as the unjust, of the identification of Christ with the needy. If they had seen Christ in the person of the poor, they would not ask, "When saw we Thee?" It is as much a revelation to them as it was to Saul when he heard the words: "Why persecutest thou Me? . . . I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." They acted from what some would contemptuously call "natural motives" of kindliness and human sympathy; even as Abraham when he "entertained angels unawares," and not as angels. Do we forget that natural kindness is a God-given instinct; that it is God within us crying out to us, and to whom we may either hearken or turn a deaf ear? Perhaps our best and purest acts are those we do most directly, most instinctively,

with least self-consciousness and self-praise. Whence comes this devil's doctrine which gives us a God of nature, and a God of grace at enmity with one another? Many millions who have never heard the name of Christ, will hear: "I was hungry and you fed Me;" and they will say: "Who art Thou, Lord?" and He will say, "I am Jesus."

CXII

CHANGEABLENESS.

Charitas nunquam excidit.

"Love never falls away." Fickleness and inconstancy is a defect of will, and supposes an unchanged judgment as to the *facts*. It is the shilly-shallying disposition which makes one incapable of decision, or of adhesion to decisions once made. But if our knowledge progresses, our resolutions and affections may reasonably be modified in accordance with them without our incurring a charge of inconstancy. Thus, when we are young, and our intellectual horizon is altering every day, it is rational to expect frequent changes in our affections and tastes. We outgrow those whom perhaps once we revered and looked up to and admired; we come to comprehend, and then to transcend them; and though we love them still, it is rather for what they were to us, than for what they are to us. This is not inconstancy, but progress. Here and there, there may be one who so transcends us, as ever to reveal new aspects and depths of mind and character, and who improves

indefinitely on acquaintance. *Quis est ille, et laudabimus eum?* If it is not so with our Saviour, it is because we do not study Him more and more, but try vainly to sustain our mature affections on the imperfect and crude idea of our childhood or youth. The idea or aspect of Christ which fires our love to-day, will not appeal to our maturer mind of a year or even a month hence. There is not, and ought not to be an end of our education in this matter; for we have come into this world for no other work than to learn how to know and praise God.

CXIII.

MERCY AND TRUTH.

Misericordia et veritas obviaverunt sibi.

"Mercy and truth have met together," that is, they met together in our Saviour; and in us, so far as we are like-minded with Him. In us sinners truth, pure and unadulterated, is often hostile to mercy and tenderness; for the simple truth is not always the *whole* truth, and a truth that is half the truth, is often the blackest of lies. To tell out our measure of the truth would many a time be treason against charity. Also, mercy at times may be hostile to truth; for there is a blind, lying, pseudo-charity, too weak to bear the truth, and therefore compelled to blink it; too narrow to love, in spite of defects and stains, and therefore ready to lie to itself and to others. It is only in their highest perfection, in their production or expansion to infinity, that they meet and coincide. The whole

"truth as it is in Christ," includes all the hidden motives; the excuses of blindness, surprise, weakness, imperfect consent; the subsequent sorrow. It also throws back the light on us who judge; bids us look at ourselves, our need of great mercy, and makes us cast down the stone with a *neque ego te condemnabo*—"Neither do I condemn thee." And again, perfect pity and mercy is that which can pity even when there is no excuse; which can take a man at his average, and love him for any little percentage of good there is about him, and still more, for the good and happiness he is yet capable of. Mercy, in Christ the Saviour, has met Truth in Christ the Judge; for Truth in its fulness is the friend of Mercy.

"Justice and peace have kissed one another." To embrace is more than to meet. It is a sign of absence and estrangement ended, or of broken friendship restored. Justice bids us seek our due, and render to others theirs; an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, *quid pro quo*. Justice, untempered and supreme, is fatal to peace. Peace, if dishonourable, the peace of the wicked, which is no peace, is fatal to justice. It was in the Incarnation and Redemption that God's wisdom devised a reconciliation between His love of justice and His love of peace, and that He might not forgive *gratis* with hurt to justice, He paid the debt Himself.

CXIV.

FEAST OF THE HOLY LANCE AND NAILS.

Durum est tibi contra stimulum calcitrare.

"His hands have made me and fashioned me;" His hands have ever been stretched out to bless me, feed me, heal me, upraise me, support me; and I have resisted Him, fought against Him like a peevish child against the loving hands that dress or tend it. I have taken those hands, that might have struck me into Hell, and have bent them back upon the Cross, and nailed them there, rigid and helpless, that I might free myself from His pestering love. And yet in vain, for I have but opened two fountains of mercy, and love is victorious still, and I have but graven my name in His hands for ever. *Quam speciosi pedes!*—How fair are the feet of Him who brings glad tidings of peace, soiled though they be, cut and way-worn; the feet of the Good Shepherd, as He returns bearing the lost sheep in His bosom; the feet where penitent love sits, and ministers with tears and spikenard. I thought to fetter these feet with nails, and so to escape the pursuit of love, and I have but lent them wings. "What have I to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to torment me before my time?" So do we resist vainly the spell of grace. *Durum est tibi contra stimulum calcitrare*—"It is hard for thee to kick against the goad."

The Sacred Heart was the central spring of all His actions, the recipient of all His sufferings. Here, as in their source, were all the riches of His goodness gathered up and treasured, as streams in the ocean; and in piercing this cistern of living waters by our ingratitude, we have only succeeded in letting loose upon ourselves a deluge of grace and mercy.

CXV.

VICARIOUS SUFFERING.

Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit

The unity of a family makes the honour or disgrace of one shared and felt by all. As the mother loves her son far more than herself, and more truly than he loves himself, his dishonour or his sorrow is felt far more keenly and heavily by her. Now Christ the Second Adam has welded the whole race into one family, whereof He is the Head, and a Head who loves each member with a love infinitely "passing the love of women." Thus the disgrace of our sins, our sorrows, fears, temptations, in some cases our eternal loss, though not His personally, were more than His by reason of our corporate union with Him, and of the boundlessness of His tender love. In this sense He has borne our sins and carried our sorrows, and been "afflicted in all our afflictions."

CXVI.

INTUITIVE VISION.

Deum videbunt.

"They shall see God.' Purity of heart is rather the condition than the cause of spiritual discernment. In the pure heart God's face is mirrored without cloudiness or distortion. But it is the mind that gazes into that mirror and reads its secrets. Many hearts have been as pure as those of Augustine, or Aquinas, yet have lacked their insight. Many minds may have been as keen, and yet fruitless, through the distortion of the medium. To say that every saint is a sage is untrue *à priori*, and still more by experience. Instance the Curé d'Ars, than whom none had a purer heart, or was favoured with more frequent and brilliant flashes of Divine light; yet here and there his reason, not naturally acute, allows him to adopt unquestioningly certain traditional rigorisms and spiritual fallacies quite alien to the teaching of his inspirations. For they who intuitively, or by inspiration, apprehend those Divine truths to which others climb laboriously by slow reasoning and weary elimination of errors, are rather likely to be wrong, when they proceed to give reasons for what they got without reason, and to entangle themselves in fallacies. To them applies the old monition: "Give your opinion, but don't give your reasons."

CXVII.

INTELLIGENT LOVE.

Da mihi tuum amorem et gratiam nam hæc mihi sufficit.

"Give me Thy love and Thy grace, for this is enough for me." An intelligent love of God is indeed all-sufficing. But it involves more than the love of a Deity enthroned far away beyond this earth. It must be the love of an all-pervading God, *ex quo, per quem, in quo omnia*, a recognition of His immediate causation, indwelling, presence, wherever there is any vestige of the good, the beautiful, or the true. It is a universal *recta sapere*, the perfection of "taste" in its deepest, highest, widest sense. As far as one fails to appreciate any created or finite goodness in nature, in art, in human character, so far is he out of sympathy with God—negatively, no doubt, but none the less truly. Religion and revelation reveal God to us in His most mysterious and lovable attributes, and secure that love which is needful for salvation; but religion, if it supplements and "informs" nature, does not destroy or supplant it; and the "natural revelation" should not be neglected, seeing that, as part of the present order, it is a grace. To the discerning, every purification and elevation of the natural taste, every new appreciation of hitherto unappreciated excellence, is a step upwards, a new remove from the wisdom that is from beneath, towards the wisdom which is from above, which is chaste, peaceable,

modest, easy to be persuaded, consenting to the good, full of mercy and good fruits.

It is by this fellowship of "taste," that in the natural order we work out, evolve, and perfect our radical participation of the Divine Nature, and become, metaphorically, sons of God in the image and likeness of their Father.

CXVIII.

PEACEABLENESS.

Si fieri potest, quod ex vobis est, cum omnibus hominibus pacem habentes.

"As far as lieth in you live peaceably with all men," *i.e.*, see that the fault is not on your side. There are those whose contentious and quarrelsome spirit makes it impossible to be at peace with them, since peace is a mutual relation. Again, there are crises where peace would be dishonourable to God, and a wrong to our neighbour. But apart from these limitations, the precept holds. It needs, however, a wide, comprehensive mind, an experience of human nature, a certain penetration of character, and, above all, a diligent, industrious love of peace to carry it into effect. Contentiousness, a desire of fighting about trifles, a lust for petty victories and superiorities, is the direct antithesis of magnanimity, or Christian big-mindedness.

CXIX.

ATTRACTIVENESS.

Si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia trăham ad meipsum.

"If I be exalted from the earth I will draw all men to Myself." There is doubtless an exaltation of soul which comes from suffering and from the cross, which "draws" men by a spell. An uncrucified Saviour had never exercised such a strange spell over the heart of man. This is indeed the mark of a genuine spiritual advance and approximation to the cross, that others are more drawn to us, and we to them. It is not the senseless self-annihilation of the fakir or dervish which attracts, but that which results necessarily from a loving devotion to the service of others; the self-sacrifice of the Good Shepherd who gives His life, not for nothing—as it were despising God's good gift—but *for the sheep*. It is from the foot of the Cross that Mary attracts us to herself most powerfully. The Cross of Christ is the very centre and nucleus of attraction, and each one as he nears it becomes himself magnetized with its mysterious influence. There is a pseudo-austerity and spiritual exaltation that lifts us above our fellow-sinners, and makes them shrink from us in awe. But the more we compare ourselves with God, the wider and deeper our grasp of His fulness, the more infinitesimal does the difference between saint and sinner, or sinner and sinner, appear.

CXX

WORTHY PRAISE.

Ut digne laudare mereamur.

"That we may worthily praise Thee." One may sound the praises of God loudly enough, and beautifully enough to charm the ears and subdue the hearts of men, and to lead them to praise Him and love Him, and yet lack that inward consecration of purity and holiness and gentleness without which one is a profane and unworthy instrument for so sacred a strain. "Who art thou that thou shouldst take My law," or My praise, "upon thy lips?" "Lord, I am a man of unclean lips, but *munda cor meum et labia mea qui labia Isaiæ prophetæ calculo mundasti ignito*—'cleanse my heart and lips as Thou didst cleanse the lips of Isaias the Prophet.'"

CXXI.

RESTRAINT.

Modestia vestra nota sit omnibus hominibus.

"Let your self-restraint appear to all." In an applied and fanciful sense this may be usefully understood of that self-restraint which is so pleasing in good art. Whether in oratory, or poetry, or

painting, or conversation, the impression of a restrained fulness, of power kept back, and but hinted at in the work before us, always pleases; while the idea of a complete exhaustion of resources, still more that of a strain wringing out the last drops of energy, is distressing in the extreme. How agreeable a flatterer he is who lets his compliments seem to leak out by accident, and instantly checks the leakage by some *brusquerie*. How persuasive a speaker he is who gives a notion of overmastering feeling kept back for the most part, but now and then victorious, whose eloquence seems to break from him, and not to be wrought up deliberately. This manifestation of self-restraint includes the notion of seeming ease in production, and goes beyond it, as though the difficulty were to hold back, and not to do far better. In art, if this is not true and natural, it must at least be simulated, on the principle, *ars est artem celare*. Else we shall have effusiveness and vulgarity.

CXXII.

THE UNIVERSAL LIFE.

Primogenitus omnis creaturæ in ipso condita sunt universa in cœlis et in terra.

From the Positivists we hear of the enthusiasm of humanity; from the Evolutionists, of cosmic enthusiasm—something, I presume, more wide-reaching and universal. Vague, intangible thoughts, yet they bear witness to a tendency of the human mind which the Catholic religion alone can rightly explain and satisfy. They imply a revolt against a narrow egoism and self-isolation which is really the logical issue of modern philosophical negations; a self-assertion of that irresistible instinctive impulse towards universal good which is in every man just because he is essentially part of the organic whole, and moved by the Author of that whole, not merely to his own isolated good, but more principally and fundamentally to the end and good of the entire body of humanity. The two above-named enthusiasms, as conceived by their advocates, are far too intangible and unreal to move any one to action. The only workable enthusiasm which addresses itself to the human imagination and the human heart, is the enthusiastic personal love of the Incarnate God, the Author of creation, the "summing-up" of humanity. To know Him under these philosophical and mysterious aspects, is but for the few; yet as our love of Him grows more intelligent, so it becomes more extended to all that is bound up with Him, namely, that cosmic glory which is to be realized in the

liberation and exaltation of humanity to life and incorruption, through its union with the Divinity. This is that "one far-off Divine event to which the whole creation moves," and for which "all creation groaneth and travaileth, expecting its deliverance."

CXXIII.

HUMAN RESPECT.

Tradetur gentibus ad illudendum et flagellandum et crucifigendum.

"He shall be delivered to be derided, scourged, and crucified." Our Saviour counts derision among His sufferings, no less than scourging and crucifying. It means that He keenly felt the mockery and jests of the ignorant *canaille;* as well, no doubt, as the false and absurd accusations on which He was condemned. Wiseacres tell us that it is folly to care what men say or think about us, for we are not better for being praised, nor worse for being blamed. Truly we are not more praiseworthy or blameworthy. But it is better to be praiseworthy and praised, than praiseworthy alone. The good opinion, the praise and love of our fellow-mortals, even of the meanest, is a possession to desire, a part of our happiness. This is because man is not alone, nor made for solitary and unsympathetic happiness, but for a common joy shared by all. God intends that we should live and desire to live in one another, in the thoughts and affections of others; that we should be mutually attractive, drawing and being drawn, first to one another, and then, in our unity, to God, our common centre and point

of rest. It is, therefore, a fundamental, God-given instinct of charity which makes us value the good opinion and love of the least of our fellows. Like every other desire, it may become inordinate and interfere with higher good; but it is no part of humility to be self-sufficing, thick-skinned, indifferent (*i.e.*, insensible) to what others will say of us. For this reason our Saviour was deeply pained by the display of contempt and dislike even in the most ignorant and despicable rabble. Still more rightly may we feel acutely the dislike or contempt of those whose judgments we value highly. We should dread the justly-merited contempt of the high-minded and noble, as in some sort a reflex of God's own mind. It is said of Dante: "He feared nothing so much as the censure of noble minds."

CXXIV.

RETROSPECTION.

Scies postea.

"What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." It is superstitious folly to attempt to divine the future; or so clearly to understand the present as to read the intentions of God's inscrutable Providence. But it is a fruitful matter of contemplation to look back, and see what came from what; how what we knew not at the time we knew afterwards; how the most perplexing turns led us straightest after all and brought us nearer to God; how our wisest suggestions or predictions, had they been realized, would have been disastrous;

and thus we shall learn to avoid the presumption of impertinent prediction, and also to hope for good out of all, without troubling as to how it is to come about. "Lord, what Thou dost I know not now, but I shall know hereafter."

CXXV.

GOD'S VICTORY.

Quia te contemplans totum deficit.

"To Thee my heart surrenders, fainting as it gazes on Thee." This is the end of God's weary conflict with the soul through the dark night of life. He cannot bless Jacob until with the touch of grace He has maimed and thrown him. When our soul, as the day breaks, at last sees God full in the face; when its narrow and crude conceptions have been exploded one by one; when through blunders and errors it has at last stumbled on the truth, and caught the face of the Father, Lover, King, and Spouse, then its subjection is perfected, its task is done, and it is ripe for Heaven. Many of us wear out God's patience with our inattention and wilful stupidity, until He leaves us and sits down weary. *Quærens me sedisti lassus.*

CXXVI.

UNEQUAL AFFECTION.

Amice, non facio tibi injuriam.

Christ had His favourites, Peter, James, and John. "He took with Him the three." "Of course," said the rest, "always Peter and James and John!" To such jealousy He would say: "Friend, I do thee no wrong. May I not do what I like with My own?" He loves most those whom He has made most lovable; that is, those who love Him most; for he is most lovable whose soul is likest to God by agreement in thought and likings, in a word, who loves God most, for the love of God is the beauty of the soul. We, too, have a like liberty, nay, a duty, of loving most whom God loves most, for whom He has done great things, from whom He expects great things, and towards whom He Himself—so far as our love is reasonable and pure—has drawn us strongly. Charity requires then that we should not hurt others by an *undue* show of preference for some; but for a certain show of preference we have this warrant of Christ's example. These three He favours in two ways: by a fuller and more special admittance to His secrets; by a more liberal share of the load of His sorrow, a deeper draught of His bitter chalice. We are willing enough to sit at His right hand and at His left, as favourites in His Kingdom, but the condition, *Potestis bibere?* stands in the way, and cools our ambition of preference. Even in the

natural order God's richer love is shown in gifts which mean greater suffering as well as greater bliss. Sorrow and joy, height and danger, light and darkness, cross and crown, all go hand in hand.

CXXVII.

SELF-CONFIDENCE.

Dicunt ei: Possumus.

"They say to Him: We can." Like all beginners, they are full of confidence in their present fervour: *Tecum paratus sum et in carcerem et in mortem ire*—"I am ready to go with Thee to prison and to death." It is by many a bitter fall that we learn to be thoroughly disappointed in ourselves, and, if we escape the danger of sullen discouragement, to believe thoroughly in grace: *Sine me nihil potestis*—"Ye can do nothing without Me." Then we confess: "Lord, though none should forsake Thee, yet would I." Our Saviour does not harshly rebuke this childlike presumption, but looks ahead to the time when humility will fulfil the vows made in pride. He does not say, "You *can*," but "You *shall indeed* drink of My chalice."

CXXVIII.

SINS AGAINST LIGHT.

Qui ambulat in tenebris, nescit quo vadat.

"He that walketh in the dark, knoweth not whither he goeth." In some ways—not in all—it seems less an insult to God to sin full in the light, than to befool ourselves culpably into some excuse

beforehand. Certainly we do ourselves a graver moral harm, and make recovery more difficult by the stultifying of our reason. For reason and truth is the root of moral recovery. He who sins in the light, knows and acknowledges his fault in the very committal of it. He of the "second class of men," tortures his mind into the belief that he is doing God's will. Were it not better to say openly: "I know the will of God, but I prefer my own," than to sin against truth as well as against goodness?

CXXIX.

FROM NATURE TO GOD.

Qui non diligit fratrem suum quem videt, Deum quem non videt quomodo potest diligere?

"If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen," *i.e.*, if a man is void of natural affection, how can he pretend to supernatural? If he have not laid the foundation, how can he raise the superstructure? If he have not that which is first, how can he have that which comes after? Can he scale heaven without a ladder? Can he support the ladder in the air, and not on the earth? If he does not know what it is to love as a child, as a brother, as a parent, a husband, a master, a friend, how can he pretend to that love which contains all these loves eminently—the love of Him who is father, spouse, friend, brother, child, all in one. The love of God postulates that all these relationships should appeal

to us and move us; if they do not do so in those near to us, it is evident that they do not do so in God. If human fatherhood means nothing to me, I shall not be moved by the fatherhood of God, which I can only know as the natural relation intensified; and so of the rest. Every new kind of natural love teaches us a new way of loving God, and a new aspect of God's love for us.

> Father Thou art to me and mother dear
> And sister too, kind husband of my heart.

CXXX.

INTERTWINED DESTINIES.

Confirma fratres.

"Strengthen thy brethren." In keeping with God's universal economy, this commission, which is given to all, is especially given to him who stood most in need of confirmation—strong in love, if you will, but impulsive, weak, and faltering. He was best fitted to save others who knew best by bitter experience that unassisted he could not so much as save himself; whose sole reliance was in that *oravi pro te, ne deficiat fides tua*—"I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."

It seems strange that one should be more animated to keep straight for love of the souls of others than for the love of God, yet indeed it is but the love of God cloaked in another form. The firm and intense feeling that the fate of another is mingled with one's own; that if I am unfaithful another will be weakened, for whose soul I shall

answer—all this is hard to analyze. It is not, however, strange that the love of our brother whom we have seen should at once derive from and yet be far more *intense* than the love of God whom we have not seen. For it is not pure "separated" perfections that move us, but participated. In their purity we cannot apprehend them save by analogy. Hence I love that which is beautiful because of its beauty; yet far more intensely than I love beauty in general.

Perhaps the above sentiment of intertwining destinies is part of that God-given instinct which governs all men as parts of whole moving to a common beatitude. *Nemo sibi vivit*—"No one lives for himself," *i.e.*, was intended to live for himself.

This notion is most foreign to modern individualism, for in principle it is essentially Catholic, and necessary to the dogmas of original or corporate sin, and of the Atonement. We believe that God would have spared Sodom for the sake of ten just men; that a Religious Order has a certain corporate merit which is affected by the conduct of single members; that in some sense the sins or merits of a father reflect upon his children, or, at least, that his piety can win for them many extra graces which else they would not receive; and that there are other bonds of union, such as friendships of all sorts, relations of superiority and subjection, of priest and penitent, of teacher and taught, which entail a like intertwining of fates, is plain enough *à priori* and *à posteriori*. When such a bond exists, each can help the other by his own fidelity to grace,

can bring a blessing upon him; and if perhaps we may not say that contrary conduct would produce a contrary effect, at least it deprives another of help that may have been needful for his salvation, and certainly was needed for his greater perfection.

CXXXI.

GLEAMS IN DARKNESS.

Mane nobiscum, Domine, quoniam advesperascit.

"Stay with us, for night is falling." Remain with us, for the darkness is coming on; that darkness and black night which recurs in our soul, if not as regularly, yet as surely as that night which inevitably follows on the day. He is with us then, and we may hear His voice, though we can see His face but dimly, if at all; nor can we discern His movements. And yet at such times, perchance in the Breaking of Bread, He flashes in upon our soul in a way that we never knew in the time of light—a sudden recognition: *Dominus est*—"It is the Lord!" and then He vanishes, leaving us in darkness, but in peace and joy.

CXXXII.

RESOLUTIONS.

Simile est regnum cœlorum fermento.

Philosophers rule the world more than statesmen or soldiers. Thoughts elaborated in an easy chair have been the ferment of revolutions in after-generations. So separate are cause and effect that

few see the connection; and philosophy is regarded as a harmless pastime. Thus too we ourselves are governed by our ideas, notions, and theories. No revolution was ever conceived and realized in a moment. The conception precedes the birth by years. Our own moral theories and resolves seem equally ineffectual when judged by their immediate consequences; but our actions of to-day are really the fruit of theories and resolves of long ago, which in their day seemed just as ineffectual. Those who make radical resolutions and expect to keep them at once, are as foolish as those who believe that such resolutions are useless. Thought is the slow-working leaven of conduct.

CXXXIII.

MANY-SIDEDNESS.

Omnibus omnia factus sum ut omnes facerem salvos.

Many-sidedness is not duplicity. The obsequious man, the *assentator*, agrees with everybody about everything, and acts to suit his company. The many-sided man is of so wide a mind that he can see an element of truth to agree with in most statements; he is of such broad sympathy that there are few phases of the heart and emotions with which he cannot feel; he so approaches the full Humanity of the God-Man that there is scarce any type of character whose goodness he does not embody. In a word, he has a phase or side corresponding to every character; and which is not assumed, but is really his own. As the polygon may indefinitely approxi-

mate to the circle, yet never be coincident; so even the most catholic-hearted and catholic-minded of God's saints must fall short of His sympathy and comprehension who alone can say, *Homo sum, et nihil humanum a me alienum duco.*

CXXXIV.

WHO TOUCHED ME?

Quis tetigit me?

"Who touched Me?" She touches His garment from behind, stealthily and secretly, full of natural shame which forbids her to cry out for help before a mixed crowd, and to make known her humiliating ailment. Why does not the All-knowing, All-pitying spare her shame? Why does He constrain her to come and fall down at His feet before all, and tell Him the whole truth? Because she touched Him, touched His Heart. We can imagine the look, the tone which turned "Who touched Me?" into a tender call to a closer embrace, clearer recognition, higher faith; the call of the Shepherd to the timorous, startled sheep; the call of the Spouse to His darling: "Thou hast wounded My Heart, My sister, My spouse; thou hast wounded My Heart with one glance of thine eyes. . . . Arise, My darling, My fair one, and come; My dove, hidden in the clefts

of the rock and the crannies in the wall; come, show Me thy face, and let thy voice sound in My ears; for sweet is thy voice and beauteous thy face. Come back, come back, O Sulamitess; come back, come back, that we may gaze upon thee!" "And when she saw that she could not be hid," crushed down by the power of self-abasing, self-pulverizing love, what was shame before became a joy and alleviation. No bar between us and those we love; we must tell them "the whole truth;" we cannot endure to be loved on false pretences, any more than to be honoured on account of an imagined excellence which we have not got.

CXXXV.

GOD, IN HUMAN AFFECTION.

Ecce, quem amas infirmatur.

"Lo, he whom Thou lovest is sick." We should imitate this delicate art of persuasion. Those whom we love, whose infirmities are a grief to us, are loved still more deeply by Him who has moved us to love them and pity them, using our heart as His instrument. So Augustine, considering how as soon as he was born, God had prepared for him the milk in his mother's breasts, and had given to her the desire to impart it, and to him the instinct to draw and receive it, gives thanks to God as the principal cause, more than to mother or nurse who were but instruments of the Divine Love. So it is God who has procured and prepared for us all pure and orderly affection of which we are the object. Our

friends are but the instruments whereby God Himself loves us—at least in the natural order. So, too, all true excellence in them which excites our love is a partial aspect of the Divine Beauty which they mirror. It is God in them that we love, it is God who loves us in them. Whom I love purely and rightly, God loves; whom I pity, God pities. Hence I can say of such, *Ecce, quem amas infirmatur.*

CXXXVI.

SEEMING ABANDONMENT.

Lazarus mortuus est; et gaudeo.

"This infirmity is not unto death, but that the glory of God may be revealed. . . . I am glad *for your sakes* that I was not there," *i.e.*, our Lord will allow His dearest friends to be the victims of infirmity, to be tempted, and even to fall: for the glory of God in their resurrection; for the help of others; for their own greater eventual gain. Not that He tempts any or fails in sufficient grace; but that, knowing their infirmity, He stays away, withholds extraordinary and effectual graces, and suffers that to happen over which He Himself weeps in sympathy. Strange mystery of grace! yet even reason can see how so seemingly perverse a course may be the straightest path of a love, wider and deeper than we can understand. Could we witness His grief over such falls, we might well say, "Behold how He loved him!" and we might puzzle ourselves with the thought: "Could not He who opened the eyes of the blind have caused that

this man should not die?" little dreaming of God's nobler intent. Let us rather say with the sorrowing sister, not in complaint, but in wondering submission and unshaken confidence: "Lord, hadst Thou been here, my brother had not died; but now I know whatsoever Thou asketh of God He will give it Thee."

CXXXVII.

THE MEDIATORIAL OFFICE.

Anima Christi, sanctifica me.

"Soul of Christ, sanctify me." Sanctification of the Christian soul is conformity to the Human Soul of Christ—a "putting on Christ;" a conformity of thought, will, affection, passion, imagination. Chiefly it lies in a likeness of understanding and of will or affection; in seeing things as Christ sees them: feeling, tasting, loving according to His feeling, love, taste. And this principally with regard to God and to man; between whom Christ, by reason of His perfect knowledge and ardent love of both sides, is the great Mediator and Peace-maker. Those who would share his mediatorial office must strive to know God and man, more and more deeply; nor that, under any merely speculative aspect, but under those aspects which most beget love. He was made Man that He might know what was in man, and be touched with a feeling for our infirmities: that, knowing all, He might excuse all and pardon all.

As in virtue of His true Humanity He knows human nature experimentally, so by His Divinity He knows the Divine Nature experimentally, as no

merely human priest can ever do. Taught by the Holy Ghost, we can at least ever draw nearer to this double sympathy of the God-Man, and so fit ourselves better to share His mediatorial office. Nor is it only by prayer and sacraments that God sanctifies and purges the soul, but by all natural and intelligible means as well: by the ministry of the Word, the *Logos*, in its widest sense. By the instrumentality of the human heart and mind, He speaks to the heart and mind.

We must, then, observe in our Saviour (1) His deep knowledge and comprehension of the nature, the mind, the love of His Eternal Father, (2) His sympathy with the Divine interests and the Divine will, (3) His comprehensive and experimental knowledge of sinful man, and (4) His consequent sympathy with the interests of humanity.

(1) "O Just Father," He says, "the world has not known Thee," has not known or believed in Thy fatherhood, in Thy paternal love, "but I have known Thee." "No man hath seen God at any time but the Only-Begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father," who is eternally being born in the very heart and focus of Divine love, "He hath declared Him," revealed the unknown. This was the great work of our Saviour's Ministry, of which He says: "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do, and now I come to Thee." "I have manifested Thy Name," I have made known Thy true nature, Thy fatherhood, "to the men whom Thou gavest Me." "For this came I into the world that I might bear witness of the truth," I, "the

Word made Flesh," Eternal Truth translated into human language—the Father's *Logos* and image. "He that hath seen Me," he that hath looked on the crucifix, "hath seen the Father," so long dreaded, distrusted, unloved, misrepresented, slandered. In this we must follow Him after our fashion; studying and pondering the character of the All-Father as displayed to us in nature and in revelation—two chapters of one book. We must know Him, not speculatively, but appreciatively, by tasting and feeling, and seeing with the inward senses His sweetness, graciousness, and beauty. We must know Him, not with hearsay knowledge, but with the familiarity that comes of continued converse; we must live *in sinu Patris*—"in the bosom of the Father," if we would declare Him to others and bring others into sympathy with our own love of Him.

(2) From the knowledge and love of the Father grew that hunger for justice, that thirst for the glory of God which found utterance in the words, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to perfect His work;" "I have a baptism to be baptized with; how I am straitened till it be accomplished." *Zelus domus tuæ comedit me*—"Zeal for Thy house has devoured Me." Here is "the great High Priest" and archetype of every priest; *sanctus, innocens, impollutus, segregatus a peccatoribus et excelsior cœlis factus;* lifted up above all and yet drawing all to Himself; *mitis et humilis, speciosus forma, et adspectu summe amabilis;* exalted, yet lowly; crucified, yet not austere or repellant; "segregate" and yet

mingling with publicans and sinners; mingling the very substance of His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity with their weakness and corruption, as the sunlight which fills, illumines, beautifies the crystal; sinking all limits and differences so that He is hardly felt among us, so much is He one of ourselves, and His life interwoven with ours: "There is one in the midst of you whom ye know not." And yet *segregatus* and *unlike* us, because *sanctus, innocens, impollutus, excelsior cœlis factus;* as a hidden leaven changing the mass of humanity, unholy, guilty, defiled, earthly, into His own nature: sanctifying, forgiving, cleansing, raising; and withal secretly, imperceptibly, "not with observation."

(3) As God, and the Maker, Mover, Quickener of every living creature, animal and spiritual, He knows "what is in man." Yet to know it experimentally it was needful He should become Man, for now we approach Him, not as one who knows the human heart speculatively, but as one who has felt. This was the end of His mortal life of labour, sorrow, temptation, suffering. For our sakes He sanctified Himself as a victim and was baptized with blood. As one who descends into the slums to study and understand and ameliorate the life of the oppressed masses, so the Eternal Son took on Him the likeness not only of flesh, but of sinful flesh, abandoning His birthright of bodily glory, and in the form of a slave and sinner became the friend of publicans and sinners. Though perfect in obedience and all virtues, He willed to go through the discipline of learning and acquiring; to take the laborious paths that we

must tread; to be "perfected by suffering," to "learn obedience" in His Passion. He would not use any one of His privileges or powers in His own behalf. The Son of God hungers, yet He will not turn stones into bread, but waits till the angels come at the will of His Father. He is as one who cannot bear to be in a better condition than those whom He loves and who are in want and poverty. So far as His privileges or gifts raise Him above them and separate Him from them, He hates those gifts and would gladly be stript of them, and would become anathema for His brethren's sake. He is not able to contain Himself, but, leaping from His throne and casting away the baubles of royalty, He flies to their embrace: "I am Joseph your brother."

The priest's vocation demands that he should strive earnestly to know the human mind and heart in all its phases. Here, if anywhere, knowledge is power. We can lead and manage others just so far as we discern their character, and no further. As far as we fail to get on with any one, so far we do not read him aright. Some seem to have a natural gift of discernment—many-sided men with a strong, sympathetic affection; but we all have a root of it within us which we can develop. As a fact, we are too self-engrossed to observe others or to interest ourselves in the study of man—man's highest study, if we except the study of God, of which it is the most efficient instrument. For example, the contentious man is so keen in defence of his own ideas and in refuting those of others, that he never knows the mind of others;

whereas the more others find us in agreement with them, the more they will open out. As with ideas, so with tastes. Sympathy lays bare the soul of others; and confidence draws confidence. Poverty of imagination, which makes us incapable of putting ourself in the place of others, is another obstacle to this study. Savage natures are for this reason brutal, cruel, wholly unsympathetic; while the over-cultured and imaginative are so sensitive as to shrink from the thought of the suffering around them, unless they are really kind and loving, as well as sensitive. We don't listen to others, or look at others, or think about others, because all our faculties of observation are centred on self If another tells us the history of some illness of his, we are either bored and heedless, or else bursting to break in and cap all he says, by instances from the history of our own interesting ailments. And so everywhere. No doubt that true self-observation and self-knowledge which poisons self-love is the greatest aid to the knowledge of others. Here, at least in ourself we have one sample of humanity submitted to our inspection; here alone we can look *intuitively* into a human mind and will and heart. Here we can learn how often to know all, is to pardon all—*Tout savoir c'est tout pardonner*. Blessed is the man of the widest internal experience, if he will but use it, digest it, ponder it, apply it; who has been darkened, troubled, tempted, fallen, raised, enlightened, pacified, time after time; year after year; who knows every movement of the soul not by hearsay, or conjecture, but by experience.

(4) And from this profound and comprehensive knowledge of humanity, with its actual depths and its possible heights, there grows up a pitying love in the hearts of those who, like the spirits of the dead, "watch with God the rolling hours; with larger, other, eyes than ours, to make allowance for us all." We need not fear those who look us through and through, so much as those who look just below the fair-seeming surface. This last is the half-penetration which breeds cynicism in him who knows little of God, little of himself, and therefore little of his fellow-men. The Christian cynic is a square-circle. But every true Christian is indeed a priest, a mediator, a vicar of Him who could with one arm reach to the height of Heaven and with the other to the depths of Hell; who could embrace and draw together in a kiss of peace the Creator and the creature. In the bosom of the Father and in the bosom of Mary, He lived with the life of God and with the life of man; and thought with the mind of God and with the mind of man; and loved with the love of God and with the love of man.

CXXXVIII.

ST. JOSEPH.

Quis, putas, est fidelis servus quem constituit Dominus super familiam suam?

"Who, think you, is that faithful servant whom the Lord hath set over His family?" The character of St. Joseph as conceived by the faithful is almost entirely constructed *à priori*. With the developing conception of the Divine Child and His Mother, the conception of the Spouse's and foster-father's dignity has grown *pari passu*. Still the occupant of the office, unlike Christ, or Peter or Paul, or John Baptist or John the Divine, is historically almost a blank, little more than a name. Holy Church therefore asks herself: who or of what sort must have been that faithful servant whom the Lord set over the household of Nazareth? She assigns to him all the characteristics becoming the pure and loving spouse of God's Mother, of the nursing father and protector of the Sacred Humanity. She blesses him: *Cui datum est, Deum quem multi voluerunt videre et non viderunt, audire et non audierunt, non solum videre et audire sed portare, deosculari, vestire et custodire*—"To whom it was given, not only to see and to hear, but to carry and fondle and clothe and protect that God whom many kings and prophets longed to see and saw not, longed to hear and heard not." She bids her royal priesthood learn

from him the pure and reverent handling of the Sacred Flesh of God; and to commend the keeping of their chastity to him to whose keeping the innocence of Christ and His Mother was entrusted, that they too may minister to Jesus and Mary with chaste hearts and holy hands. Thus the idea of his office and official virtues and prerogatives steadily developed into this helpful form, although his personality to some extent lies hidden for ever.

CXXXIX.

MEDIATION.

Videbitis angelos Dei ascendentes et descendentes supra Filium Hominis.

"Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man"—not ascending from Him and coming down to Him, as it were, ministering to Him; but using Him as Jacob's ladder by which Heaven and Earth, sundered by sin, are linked together again and bridged over, and commerce resumed. Descending with messages and ministries of peace on earth to men of good-will; ascending with the interest on graces well used, with glory to God in the highest. He is such a ladder who so bridges over the gulf between God and a sinful soul, that the angels may pass and repass as of old before the bridge was broken. *Beati pacifici*—"Blessed are the peace-makers."

CXL.

ST. JOSEPH.

Qui deducis velut ovem Joseph.[1]

"Who guidest Joseph as a sheep." St. Joseph is eminently docile and leadable; like a sheep following the shepherd who goes before. He pauses at times, timid and in doubt: till the shepherd "calls him by his name:" "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife." The sheep follows blindly, it knows not where nor why; it does not interpret, foresee, prophesy. "Rise and flee," says the shepherd, suddenly, without previous intimation or hint, in the dead of night. And following his shepherd's call he rose and fled. Nor is he told for how long a stay he is to prepare himself; but only *usque dum dicam tibi, i.e.*, till the next call. "Keep Thou my feet. I do not ask to see the distant scene; one step enough for me." Here it is that one so often breaks down, impatient of suspense and uncertainty; diffident of God's all-controlling goodness. We must have some glimpse forward, whether by presentiments, prognostications, dreams, coincidences, or more commonly by a vain attempt to see God's future plans written on the face of the present. For all such matters as are beyond human foresight and control, we must be like St. Joseph, improvident as a sheep, and as faithful and ready at a call. To him we may apply: *Dominus pascit me et nihil mihi deerit. In loco pascuæ*

[1] Introit for the Patronage of St. Joseph.

ibi me collocavit. Super aquas refectionis educavit me; animam meam convertit. . . . Nam etsi ambulavero in medio umbræ mortis non timebit cor meum; quoniam tu mecum es; virga tua et baculus tuus ipsa me consolata sunt—"Our Lord shepherds me, and I shall want for nothing. He hath set me in the place of pasture; and hath led me by refreshing streams and hath restored my failing life. For though I should walk overshadowed by death, my heart will not fear, for Thou art with me; and Thy very rod is my consolation." As in life, so in death's dark shadow, he is led on by the Good Shepherd, out into the light again, a light that knows no shadow; to pastures and waters of refreshment, to the bread of angels, and the clear crystal river of the water of life. *Qui regis Israel intende; qui deducis velut ovem Joseph.*

CXLI.

OUR OWN NAME.

Proprias oves vocat nominatim.

"He calleth them all by their names." This expresses a minuteness of personal knowledge got by close intimacy and observation. What more indistinguishable to an outsider than one sheep from another? One's own name to those that know us is a summary of all they know about us. It is an idea whose content is ever growing and modifying. What must it mean on the lips of God, my Shepherd, whose eyes have never been turned an instant from the scrutiny of my inmost soul; before whom my future life, my eternal destiny, is

already, as it were, a fact of the past? It is this awful knowledge of its full meaning that makes our name so potent a spell in God's mouth, which makes His call irresistible. Those who know us can so far rule and control us. How can we, then, resist Him, when He calls us by our name? "Jesus saith to her: Mary. And she turneth and saith to Him: My Master."

CXLII.

THE SMOKING FLAX.

Arundinem quassatam non confringet, et linum fumigans non extinguet.

God would have spared all Sodom for the sake of ten just, and He spares many a sinner for the sake of some little seed of good not yet dead, some last smouldering spark that may yet be blown into a flame. We contrariwise condemn wholesale for one defect, pressing rigidly the principle, *Malum ex quocunque defectu;* not even taking a man on his average. We root up the little wheat with the tares, or it may be even we root up far more wheat than tares. So in dealing with systems, enterprises, movements, we have no idea of sparing to the last; no faith in the self-righting, self-developing power of the good and true; in the self-dissipating tendency of the false and bad. It were diviner to imitate God, who fans and fosters the expiring sparks of light and love wherever He finds them; who "will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax."

CXLIII.

THE TREE AND ITS FRUIT.

Numquid colligunt de spinis uvas, aut de tribulis ficus?

"Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?" "Whatever of dignity, whatever of strength we have within us, will dignify and will make strong the labours of our hands; whatever littleness degrades our spirit, will lessen them and drag them down; whatever noble fire is in our hearts, will burn also in our work; whatever purity is ours, will chasten and exalt it. For as we are, so our work is; and what we sow in our lives, that beyond a doubt we shall reap, for good or for ill, in the strengthening or defacing of whatever gifts have fallen to our lot."[1]

CXLIV.

THE LIKENESS OF SINFUL FLESH.

Deus Filium suum mittens, in similitudinem carnis peccati.

"God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." He came not only in the likeness of flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh, with all the outward seeming of a sinner, sin only excepted; circumcised as one subservient to concupiscence; presented and redeemed as one whose life was forfeit by sin, and as defiling rather than engracing the Mother that bore Him; baptized with the baptism of repentance, living under the bondage of the law in the "form

[1] Sir F. Leighton.

of a servant," rather than in the freedom of the sons of God; esteemed as one "stricken, smitten of God and afflicted." And all this that He might suppress whatever could distance Him from those whom He was not ashamed to call "brethren," his friends, the publicans and sinners; that He might be "as other men are," "even as this publican;" in no way a Pharisee or separatist; becoming all things to all men that by all means He might gain some.

CXLV.

NATURAL AFFECTIONS.

Quicunque enim fecerit voluntatem Patris mei, ipse meus frater, et soror, et mater est.

"He that doth the will of My Father, . . . the same is My mother, My sister, and My brother." Words which show, not how little an apostle should care for his mother, his sister, and his brother, but how tenderly he should love those who do the will of His Father in Heaven, those who have one enthusiasm with himself, *idem velle, idem nolle*. The love a man has for his wife, his child, his mother, his friend, are all different in kind and motived differently. They do not exclude or take from one another. Rather, so far as any one of them is noble and full, it raises the tone of the affections in general. So the love of his God is a distinct affection crowning and perfecting the rest, but not draining their strength as it might do were love homogeneous. It is true that in some sense the love of God contains superexcellently the motive

and perfection of every other love, yet it does not contain it formally. If then the apostolic vocation ever requires us to forsake all, it is to be understood as to the external service of God, just as a man must leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, so far as his new duties are incompatible with his former duties. Christ did not leave His Mother in affection, when He left her in fact for the business of His Heavenly Father. We must never suppose that Christian sanctity lessens or warps any ordinate natural perfection of the heart or mind.

CXLVI.

VISION AND LOVE.

Videns eum cecidit ad pedes ejus.

We are told continually to love God, to set our affections on things above. Yet few teachers ever state or face the difficulty that love is not directly under our free control. In both the natural and supernatural order it is God's gift to a large extent. *Spiritus ubi vult spirat*—"The spirit breathes where it chooses;" and all we can directly do is to avoid putting impediments in its way, or else to secure the conditions of its presence. As tastes can be trained, so the affections. It were the part of a more skilled teacher to lead us to see God in so fair a light as might kindle our love more brightly. *Videbimus eum sicuti est;* seeing God as He is, or as He sees Himself, is the cause of loving Him as He loves Himself. Charity is knowledge; not any knowledge, but "real" as opposed to

"notional;" the knowledge of intimacy and appreciation. The same beauty is presented to the eyes of the poet and to the eyes of the sot, yet to the former it speaks a thousand things, to the latter, not one word.

A primrose on the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him
And it was nothing more.

The dry cold light of the lower intellect, how keen soever, can never reveal to us "the King in His beauty." This is wisdom's part. As the just alone can appreciate and understand the beauty of justice, and the merciful that of mercy, and the heroic that of heroism; so in general it is only those who are in sympathy with goodness who can discern and appreciate goodness. Thus does the moral character determine our power of apprehension.

CXLVII.

FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN.

Pleni sunt cœli et terra gloria tua.

"Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory." The *Ascensio mentis in Deum*, must be through creatures; from broken lights to their source. "They come as broken lights from Thee, but Thou, O Lord, art more than they." David uses this method when, in his Psalms, he leads us from creature to creature, and bids us praise the Divinity whose power, wisdom, and love, each shadows forth. We have in this life no other view of the Divine attributes save in their effects. God must be sought, known, loved

in His works, or nowhere. Hence it is primary to teach men to read those works aright, to "taste" them, and see how gracious must be their Maker. As to the works of physical nature, it is partly to science and partly to art that the duty of teaching men to observe and to admire belongs; while to ethics belongs the office of forming the moral taste by which we are drawn to love that word which God speaks to us in the human souls of the great and the good; and above all in the Sacred Soul of the Incarnate, that inexhaustible treasure of moral beauty. Our power of loving grows as our sense of the beautiful is deepened, widened, purified, and refined; and this in turn depends primarily on our moral purity and appreciativeness. Which then comes first? *i.e.*, if it is only the good, who have an eye for goodness, and if it is only those who love goodness who are good, where do we begin? Perhaps the case is analogous to that of advance in truth. We start life with a few natural principles and necessary experiences by means of which we are in a position to acquire more if we use them properly. Every new truth and experience thus gained gives us a new perceptivity, *i.e.*, makes us sensitive and responsive to reasoning and evidence that otherwise would not have appealed to us. Similarly we start with a certain inborn potential sense of goodness and beauty which is strengthened and expanded by exercise, by every internal or external act, until we become sensitive to goodness and beauty lurking everywhere.

CXLVIII.

EPIPHANY.

Invenietis cum quæsieritis me in toto corde vestro.

"If with all your hearts you seek Me, you shall surely find Me." The whole-hearted desire for light will make the seeker scan the sky hour after hour for the sign of its coming; it will make his vision keen to catch the first glimmer, while others, like Herod or the priests, will be listless and dead, and will slumber on right into the heart of the day. First graces as a rule are small and hardly noticeable save to those "who watch for the morning." The Wise Men follow the clue, *promptly*, *diligently*, *perseveringly*. *Promptly*, like Matthew, who arose and left his money-table; like the Apostles, who left their half-mended nets and their father. How many lose the light by procrastination! If we take our eyes from the star for one instant we may never find its place again. *Diligently*, *i.e.*, as one who loves, and therefore is ready for suffering and sacrifice, who is *paratus omnia respuere propter dilectum* —"ready to contemn everything for the beloved." They leave home and occupation, perhaps reputation; they enter on a tedious uncertain journey; they have no eye whatever to temporal or selfish gain; they are ready to make rich offerings of their best, and, by adoration and homage, to offer themselves, their service, and labour to the new-born King. Such souls as these God would draw out of the darkness of Hell itself, could they be found there. *Perseveringly: Usque dum veniens staret supra*

ubi erat puer. To begin well and zealously is common enough, but how few survive the death of novelty or the monotonous day by day routine of journeying, or the encounter of perils and oppositions unforeseen and even foreseen; or the sudden and unaccountable withdrawals of special guidance!

Such souls following the first glimmer of faith, are led through the windings, as it were, of a dark subterranean labyrinth, from light to light, strength to strength, into the full brightness of noonday to appear before the face of the God of gods in Sion, *usque dum veniens staret supra ubi erat puer. Intrantes domum, i.e.*, entering the Divine household as sons by adoption: *Jam non estis hospites et advenæ sed estis cives sanctorum et domestici Dei*—"Now ye are no longer guests and strangers, but fellow-citizens with the Saints and of the household of God."

CXLIX.

ADORATION.

Procidentes adoraverunt eum.

"Falling down they adored Him." Falling down, an expression of lowliness and comparative nothingness; a fainting, or *deliquium*, in the contemplation of that which overwhelms and subdues. When the Queen of Sheba beheld the glory of Solomon, "her heart died within her;" and Aquinas cries out, *Cor meum te contemplans totum deficit*—"My heart faints as I gaze on thee." High as was their repute for wisdom and learning,

these Magi fall down to adore a speechless, and seemingly mindless, Infant as the Incarnate Wisdom and Light of the World. Great as was their wealth and barbaric magnificence, they adore this child of poverty as the Giver of all, *ex quo omnia per quem omnia.* Powerful and influential as they were in their own land, they deemed it prudent to leave their concerns in order to do homage to a helpless unprotected babe, and to cast their crowns before His feet as King of kings and Lord of lords. It was a veritable *Sume Domine et suscipe*—"Take, O Lord, and receive."

CL.

OBLATION.

Apertis thesauris obtulerunt ei munera.

"Opening their stores they made Him presents." A treasure is what we keep close, under lock and key; something hidden away, something men do not suspect us of possessing. Its value is sometimes relative and personal to ourselves alone; sometimes relative to the common estimation of some class of men larger or smaller; but never relatively to God. Gold has its value because men find it hard to procure; but God can create it at will, for with Him to will is to have. Or because it is beautiful; but God is subsistent Beauty. Or because it is useful; but God needs it not. Myrrh is anti-corruptive, but God is a Spirit. Incense is fragrant, but what is it to the fragrance of Mary's soul, whose name was as ointment poured out. Yet

to the Magi these things were treasures, and they had carried them from afar and had opened them out and given generously.

> Gladly Thou givest, dearest Lord,
> Gladly Thy gift should be restored;
> Freely Thou givest, and Thy word
> Is; Freely give.
> He only, who forgets to hoard,
> Has learnt to live.[1]

Gifts, it is said, are the utterance of love; valued for the love they betoken, but not for themselves, *Non quæro donum tuum sed te*—"I seek not thy gift, but thyself." It is only in a soul, that a soul can rest; its appetite is not for a thing, but for a person, *amare et amari*—"to love and be loved," as Augustine says. It was these three faithful, loyal, loving hearts, and not their gifts, that were to the love-seeking, disconsolate Heart of God, at once gold and frankincense and myrrh; rare, fragrant, incorruptible. The indwelling Spirit of Love works this alchemy with poor flesh and blood, and turns our dross into gold, our corruption into sweetness. *Cor mundum crea in me Deus*—"Create a clean heart in me, O God."

CLI

GOLD, FRANKINCENSE, AND MYRRH.

Ecclesiæ tuæ, quæsumus Domine, dona propitius intuere; quibus non jam aurum thus et myrrha profertur, sed quod eisdem muneribus declaratur, immolatur, et sumitur, Jesus Christus Filius tuus Dominus noster.[1]

"Look favourably, O Lord, on the gifts of Thy Church, wherein we offer not unto Thee gold, frankincense, and myrrh, but where that which they signify is sacrificed and received, Jesus Christ, Thy Son." *Christ is the Gold* of Divine Wisdom, that *thesaurus inestimabilis quo qui usi sunt facti sunt amici Dei propter dona disciplinæ commendati.* He is the treasure hidden in the field, the gold of divinity wrapped in the earth of humanity, "which when a man hath found he goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field." Again He is fine gold tried in the fierce fire of His Passion, and purified from the sins of all mankind which He bore in His own person, as Head of the mystical body, answerable for the deeds of its members. He is the wealth of the Eternal Father, His alms to us poor mendicants; for "God so loved the world that *He gave* His Only-Begotten." He gave, that we might have something to give; that we might be able to present an offering through which, and with which the otherwise worthless offering of ourselves and our all is acceptable. This is that treasure which the Church of Humanity lays on God's altars day by day. *Christ is the frankincense.* He is that Prayer which

[1] Secret for the Epiphany.

is set forth in God's sight as incense, and the lifting up of whose hands on Calvary is as an evening sacrifice, winning pardon for the sins of the day that is past, and protection from the perils of the instant night. It was for the priest to offer incense, *Fungi sacerdotio . . . et offerre illi incensum dignum in odorem suavitatis;* but in the archetype, Priest and Offering are one. As He is the Lamb, so is He the Bread, and the First-Fruits, and the Incense ascending for an odour of sweetness, an emblem of acceptable prayer; and of that priestly intercession which is continued unbroken in Heaven and re-echoed by every Mass on earth.—*Christ is the Myrrh,* the author of incorruption and sweetness, "I am the Resurrection and the Life;" the "Healer of the Nations," the physician of soul and body. When Christ is mingled with art, letters, science, philosophy, ethics, politics, corruption vanishes; when He is driven away, putrescence follows.

CLII.

GOD'S PLANS UNSEARCHABLE.

Surge in instanti et fuge.

"Rise at once and fly." If the guiding star had not failed the Magi, apparently without assignable reason, they need not have inquired the whereabouts of Christ, and Herod would have heard nothing to excite his jealousy; and the infants would not have been slaughtered, nor the flight into Egypt been necessary. How ignorant and presumptuous to divine and predict the ends to which God's Pro-

vidence is working; beyond affirming that all is in His hands and that all makes for good in the last event and issue, how or when, who can say, unless he has been "God's counsellor from the beginning"? Many pious people are addicted to a certain sort of sanctified necromancy, and see omens everywhere, and can foretell precisely, in spite of countless failures experienced, what will come out of what. *In instanti*—"Rise at once." Just as we should have managed the star better; so here we should have given St. Joseph timely warning a day or so beforehand. And why not? Why this suddenness? Perhaps because the anticipation of trouble only increases trouble; perhaps because St. Joseph's will was so well balanced and indifferent that such warning was superfluous. But in truth we are not told, and can but guess idly. Such sudden calls are frequent in God's dealings with great saints; while we ordinary souls are led by ordinary paths. "Get thee up out of thy country and thy kindred," was the call by which Abraham was wrenched from the surroundings of home and turned into a wandering exile; even as here, St. Joseph's tranquil, unsuspecting slumber is rudely changed for the bustle and anxiety of sudden flight into the darkness. Such, for many, is the summons of death, coming as a thief in the night: *Ecce sponsus venit. Beatus ille servus quem cum venerit dominus ejus et pulsaverit januam invenerit vigilantem*—"Lo, the bridegroom cometh. Blessed is that servant who is found waiting when his Master knock."

CLIII.

THE COST OF OUR PRODUCTION.

Recordare Jesu pie quod sum causa tuæ viæ.

"Remember, good Jesu, what I have cost you. Think what a troublesome child I have been and am; all the annoyance I have given; and if labour is the foundation of the right of property, think of all the labour you have put into me, however poor be the results. Think how deeply I am yours." The very hardness and crabbedness of the material used, gives a value to a carving artistically hideous, which in more tractable matter would be inexcusable. We forgive in mother-o'-pearl what in metal were unpardonable. God may be more glorified in the little—perhaps in the nothing—that He gets out of some, than in the hundred-fold he gets out of others. He will not throw away lightly what He has laboured at so long. That opposition, resistance and difficulty fire our energy and determination is not mere perversity, but has its roots in the nature of love, and finds its archetype in God.

CLIV.

THE SENSE OF SECURITY.

Nolite itaque amittere confidentiam vestram.

"Do not, therefore, lose your confidence." It is hard to conceive a man who is in any sense devoted to his profession or occupation, or to some cause with which his substantial happiness is bound up, throwing the whole thing up for some momentary gratification, how intense soever. It would surely be the result of no slight deliberation carried on for days or weeks. So it is morally impossible for one who lives habitually for God and God's service, who is, as St. Thomas says, dedicated to God, to apostatize or sin mortally in a moment under any pressure of temptation, however great—there is not sufficient time for the deliberation proportioned to such a change. For "full deliberation" is relative to the importance of the step taken; indefinitely less being requisite for a venial than for a mortal sin. No doubt, the fatal step is always the act of a moment, but then it is a moment which closes a period of absolute coldness and indifference to the service of God; of wavering allegiance; during which the wish to keep even from mortal sin has been growing weaker and weaker. There is but one step over the brink of the precipice; but there is many a step before one gets to the brink. Some speak as though a soul in grace lived on the brink habitually.

CLV.

GROWTH A MYSTERY.

Quis autem vestrum cogitans potest adjicere ad staturam suam cubitum unum?

"Which of you can add one cubit to his stature, by his own devices?" The Kingdom of Heaven is as though a man should sow seed and rise by day and rest by night, and it cometh up he knoweth not how. So of the growth of faith and charity in each man's heart. At most we can secure negative conditions. We can remove stones and weeds and all that hinders God's work. But the process of growth is a mystery, and all positive directions and prescriptions fail. God gives as He chooses, enough to all, more to some; and when and how He chooses. This law holds even in the natural order to a large extent. Who can force the understanding or the affection in their growth, or do more than prune and correct? We rise and rest, and rest and rise, and it cometh up we know not how.

CLVI.

WHERE IS THY BROTHER?

Quos dedisti mihi custodivi, et nemo ex eis periit nisi filius perditionis.

"Those whom Thou gavest Me I have kept and not one is lost." There is not a soul that has not in some measure received a similar trust from God, or on whose labour or prayer or co-operation

with grace the salvation and sanctification of certain others has not been made dependent; souls of which we shall have to say one day to God: "They were Thine and Thou gavest them to me." Shall we be able to say also: "I have kept those whom Thou gavest me, and not one is lost save the son of perdition," *i.e.*, save those who were lost or injured by their own fault alone, and not through any fault of mine. Some, of course, are given to us in a more intimate and explicit manner than others; committed to our charge; commended to our prayers; thrown into converse with us. But these are few compared with the many whom perhaps we have never seen or heard of. *Væ soli:* Woe to him who appears alone before God, or if not alone, yet with but a few stragglers of his neglected flock; who answers the question: "Where is thy brother?" with: "Am I my brother's keeper?" *Ecce ego,* says the Good Shepherd, *et pueri mei quos dedit mihi Dominus*—"Behold me and my children whom God has given me"—"of those whom Thou hast given me, not one is lost."

CLVII.

HEROD.

Turbatus est et omnis Jerosolyma cum eo.

"Herod was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him." To "men of good-will" the tidings of the Messias' Birth was an evangel, "good news" of peace. When the Magi saw the star, *gavisi sunt gaudio magno valde*—"they rejoiced exceedingly;"

but Herod is disturbed, harassed, and agitated. So according to the disposition of the soul, the approach of grace, the call to higher things is for some a drop of water falling on a sponge, which receives it noiselessly, unresistingly, and drinks it in; for others it is the same drop falling noisily on the resisting, impenetrable rock. Herod clings rigidly to his possessions and dignities with a will resolute to hold out against God Himself if need be. "And all Jerusalem with him," *i.e.*, official Jerusalem, which hung upon his favour obsequiously. *Ut et ego veniens adorem eum*—"When you have found Him, tell me, that I may come and adore Him." Here he shows himself the true child of the Father of Lies. In his dealings with pure, single-hearted souls, he must deceive them, if at all, under semblance of good. True heavenly wisdom, like that of the Magi, is unworldly, unsuspicious, "thinketh no evil;" it goes like a lamb into the midst of wolves, trusting in the promise: *Angelis suis mandavit de te*—"He has given His angels charge of thee"—a promise verified in this case.

CLVIII.

MEEKNESS.

Obsecro vos per mansuetudinem et modestiam Christi.

"I entreat you by the meekness of Christ." Meekness is more than the mere control of the passion of anger. That the instinct of justice should be approved, checked, and governed by reason, is a matter of precept. He who fails in this, and follows

his instinct blindfold, is "overcome of evil." "Be not overcome by evil," but, on the contrary, "overcome evil by good." For this is the highest and noblest triumph. Just vengeance in due place and season is a remedy for wrong, a victory over evil; but it is the least glorious victory. Hence even God falls back upon it as a last resort, deferring, age after age, the final judgment; willing that, if possible, none should perish, but that all should come to repentance; that every rebel will should be self-humbled, rather than coerced reluctantly; that evil should be conquered by good, rather than by evil. It is His glory to bring good out of evil; and when we have most reason to despair before His just anger, to turn round upon us and overwhelm us with love; running forth to meet us when yet a long way off; falling on our neck and kissing us, receiving us home to the dignity of sonship, seating us at the Eucharistic Feast in the Kingdom of God. This is a Divine victory, that the rebel heart should be humbled and broken by love rather than by fear; that it should yield freely and not on compulsion. "If then thy enemy hunger, feed him, . . . for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head." So "when we were yet enemies, Christ died for the ungodly." Man's Maker looked down upon the sinful multitudes of Adam's race, harassed and scattered as sheep without a shepherd, and moved with compassion, forgetful of just anger, He said: "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" Bread in the desert there was none to be found, only "the husks that the swine did eat;" and so

"He gave them Bread from Heaven"—Bread prepared and perfected on Calvary; and said: "Take, eat, this is My Body which is broken for you; this, My Blood which is shed for you." *O Felix Culpa quæ talem et tantum meruit habere redemptorem!*—"O blessed evil overwhelmed by so great a good!" Had there been no sin, what should we have known of the free, generous mercies of God, who heaps coals of fire on our head, the fire of charity, of the multiform gifts and graces of His Holy Spirit.

CLIX.

LIFE'S LAST LESSON.

Domine, ad quem ibimus?

"Lord, to whom shall we go?" Life's last lesson; the final result of our spiritual education. We are led on step by step from lower to higher, "seeking rest and finding none." As our tastes get refined our sufferings increase; as we become more enchanted of the ideal, we grow more disenchanted with the real: so that, for many, life seems one huge bitter disappointment, which gradually evolves itself like a mist rising from the earth, slowly thickening into impenetrable darkness. And yet is it not all in perfect harmony with the purpose of life as revealed by Christ? that purpose being to teach man to know himself and to know God; to know that his spiritual hunger is not for the true, the good, the beautiful, or for the more true; but for the living, subsistent Truth, Goodness, Beauty. And this he learns *pro more suo*, almost experimentally. "Taste and see."

He has to taste each proffered finite happiness and find that its flavour quickly cloys, and but whets the appetite for something better; and this again in its turn sends him to look still higher. He who is true to his higher self and refuses to lower his ideals for the sake of avoiding the pain of conscious discord, will indeed suffer; but with a purgative and salutary suffering. If standing in the midst of his shattered idols he has learnt to say: *Domine, ad quem ibimus?* he has at once reached the lowest depth and the loftiest height.[1]

CLX.

LIFE A DREAM.

Moram autem faciente sponso dormitaverunt omnes et dormierunt.

"While the Bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept." We should not look on life as we know it, and as it appears to us, as if it were a reality, something substantial and *propter se;* or forget that in a true sense it is but a shadow of an unknown substance; a vague hint of a truth yet to be revealed, a dream in a night from which we are not yet wakened. What wonder if it is disconnected, bizarre, fantastic, mutable, and dream-like in every way! We know as much of the good which God is bringing out of evil, as a child who cries under the doctor's knife knows the purport of its suffering. Apart from all revelation, the chances of our seeing

[1] For all this see St. Augustine, *Confess.* x. c. vi. "Non dubia sed . . . responsio eorum species eorum."

the right explanation of life's problems are just infinitesimal, the certainty that we do not, all but absolute. That on such an inadequate view we should be dogmatic pessimists is ridiculous: whereas, by analogy, we can see clearly why the most beneficent and wisest scheme, viewed imperfectly, must appear faulty and unsatisfactory.

CLXI.

CONVERSION.

Erravi sicut ovis quæ periit quære servum tuum quia mandata tua non sum oblitus.

"I have strayed like a lost sheep. Seek me, for I do not forget Thy commandments." For silliness, if for nothing else, our soul is well likened to a sheep; the silliness which makes us follow those nearest to us blindly for better or for worse; the silliness which draws us away into danger on pretext of good, in search of better pasturage than that which our Shepherd judges fit for us. *Dominus regit me et nihil mihi deerit in loco pascuæ ibi me collocavit.* Lost and bewildered the sheep cries out, bleating for its shepherd and for its fellows; but the wandering soul, separated from Christ and the body of His flock, cannot so much as cry out or wish to be saved until Christ comes to seek it: *Libera nos jam invocantes te; libera etiam eos qui nondum te invocant, ut invocent te et liberes eos*—"Save us who call upon Thee. Save also those who as yet do not call upon Thee, that they may call upon Thee,

and Thou mayst save them."[1] The faintest wish to be better, the feeblest troubling about our spiritual state, is the first distant echo of the Shepherd's voice "calling us by our name." It is an earnest that He has begun to seek us, and will not rest till He has found us and borne us home on His shoulder rejoicing.

Quia mandata tua non sum oblitus—"Because I have not forgotten Thy commandments." For already Thou hast begun to seek me. That the knowledge of Thy commandments should once have been given me; that it should remain in the treasury of my memory; that it should be drawn forth thence into the light of actual consideration; that it should move me to the love of that forgotten wisdom "whose ways were ways of pleasantness, and all whose paths were peace," and to a remembrance of the "plenty and to spare," which the very slaves in my Father's house are enjoying while I perish with hunger—all this is "preventive" grace; the call of the Shepherd seeking me. Or again, we may take it as the plea of one who has strayed, as David did, rather through surprise and frailty than through malice or a slow-growing indifference; who habitually loves God's law, *Quomodo dilexi legem tuam Domine, tota die meditatio mea est;* or who at least has in him the first root of recovery in an unwavering faith: "For though he has sinned," the Church pleads in her prayer for the dying, "he hath not denied the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

[1] Aug. *Conf.* i. 10.

CLXII.

THE NAME OF GOD.

Serva Pater in nomine tuo quos dedisti mihi.

"Father, keep in Thy Name those whom Thou hast given Me." His finished work was the declaration of that Name or Nature; to reveal God as Father, "My Father and your Father," "the Father Himself loveth you;" to be Himself, as Man, a created word or expression of the Divine goodness, love, and pity, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father;" to drive from men's minds all harsh, cruel, narrow, unworthy conceptions of their God and Maker. "I have manifested Thy Name to the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world," to those who were chosen to be guardians of this fuller and truer revelation. "Keep them in Thy Name," let them not depart from this saving knowledge, for their own sakes and the sake of "those who through their word shall believe in Me."

"While I was with them I kept them in Thy Name." He was with us in order to show us the Father—that "unknown God whom ye ignorantly worship," to show Him forth in His most perfect created image, in the Sacred Humanity, in the soul and heart, in the birth and life and converse and death of the Son of Mary. "And now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee." He fears to leave them orphaned of His guidance and help. Like St. Paul, He is divided between two desires, to be with God and to be with

his children. So He prays: "Keep them in Thy Name;" and the answer to that prayer is alluded to in the words, "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you;" and "Satan hath desired to have you . . . but I have prayed for thee . . . and thou in turn confirm thy brethren." The Holy Spirit abiding with the Church of Peter, is Christ, still on earth, keeping us in the name and true knowledge of the Father.

It is for us to keep in God's Name those whom He has given us; to fight against the Devil and his angels, who through the mouths of their agents, willing or unwilling, bad or good, conscious or unconscious, have been calumniators of God's goodness from the beginning. It is their special delight to play upon the natural bent of those good people who are inclined to strictness and rigorism, and to drive them over the borders of reason and faith; and in the minds of all, to raise up phantoms of the imagination, gross, anthropomorphic caricatures, and perversions of the truth, so that the Name of God may be a name of terror or depression, or dreary monotony. Be it ours to see that that Name is written in gold on the hearts and affections of men; and that no breath of heretical rigorism may ever tarnish its brightness. *Serva eos in nomine tuo quos dedisti mihi.*

CLXIII.

FORGIVING AND FORGETTING.

Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis.

"Turn away Thy face from my sins." We turn away from what pains us, from the defects and faults of those we love. Indeed, this is all the difference between charitable and uncharitable criticism, that the latter dwells not reluctantly but with a certain satisfaction on the blemishes of one whom we dislike; being anxious to draw others into sympathy with our dislike. When God has forgiven He would fain forget, were it possible to do so. He "casts our sins behind His back," saying, "Their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more.' He is to us afterwards, all that He was before, and even more. But the condition of this full-hearted forgiveness is first, that we should turn our eyes upon our own sins: *Peccatum meum contra me est semper*— "My sin is ever before me;" not with scrupulosity, or sad diffidence, but as on the scars whose healing is a standing testimony both to God's infinite pity and power, and to our own weakness, misery, and malice. Pride turns our eyes away from our own sins, and on to the frailties of others weaker than ourselves, and hates to contemplate the more perfect types which condemn us. Another condition is to forget, as far as possible, the wrongs others may have done us; or at least not willingly to recollect and brood over them with morbid satisfaction; and in general not to dwell on the seamy side of men's characters, but,

without blind optimism, to lean towards the larger, gentler, kindlier view. *Omnes iniquitates meas dele*—"Blot out all my iniquities." God writes His law upon the eternal rock; our transgressions He writes upon the sand, whence they may be easily effaced by the rain of contrite tears, or the breath of our sighing. Men would harshly condemn us to the utmost penalty of the law; but He who made man and "knows what is in man," writes His indictment on the dust; and if we do not condemn others, He will say, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, sin no more."

CLXIV.

ONE GOD.

Unus Deus et Pater omnium.

"One God and Father of all." It has been said scoffingly, that man has made for himself a God in his own image and likeness, "in the image and likeness of man created he Him." If we put "conceived" for "created," nothing could be truer, nothing else could be true. Our highest conception of God must be a piecing together of the choicest materials from our store of experience. In that store our best treasures are examples of humanity in its noblest phases. Above these we cannot go in the proper conceiving or realizing of spiritual and moral excellence. We know there *is* a higher, but we do not know that higher; that is, we cannot mentally picture it or realize it, or be *emotionally* stirred by it. The purely spiritual will which follows reason can be guided in its choice by the intellectual notion of the infinite, but the feelings as a rule are not enlisted in its service.

It is a natural consequence of this, that according to the width of our experience and the depth of our appreciation of what is good and best everywhere, especially in human character, will be the realistic conception we form of God and the consequent love elicited by that conception. No two of these conceptions are ever wholly the same, while the conceptions of different ages and countries differ widely according to the "image and likeness of

man," in those ages and countries. Still, as under all variations of race there is a constant humanity, so there is an unchanging element in man's notion of Divinity as being the Fulness of Beauty and Goodness, whatever be his notion of the good and beautiful. Nor is one aspect false, because another is fuller. Clough writes:

> Yet oh, when crushed and dead
> The sympathies of outward things have fled,
> Remember that which lives and cannot die,
> Ours may not be one home, nor ever will,
> Nor yet one land or sky.
> But brother, brother, we have *one* God still.

But how largely this must be modified by the previous thought is evident. There are those whose concept of God contains so little that is true, and so much alloy of extraneous and unworthy matter, that we can hardly feel that we worship the same God at all. Perhaps the closest union of mind and heart is approached by those who advance hand in hand, growing daily to a clearer light and more perfect love of God; for it is an agreement in truth and taste about that in which all other truths and tastes find their adequate object and satisfaction. So far as two have one God, *i.e.*, conceive God in the same way, there is a spiritual bond between them that can be largely independent of place and time. Yet it must be the knowledge and love of a *Person* in whom both live and move and think and feel and are; who holds each by the hand across all stretches of space and time, and links them together.

CLXV.

DARKNESS.

Memor fui nocte Nominis tui Domine.

"In the night I remembered Thy Name, O Lord." In the daytime the measureless universe, the "kingdoms of infinity" are hid from us, and earth with its coloured variety seems everything. At night earth is dark and its beauty lost to us, yet we become conscious of the infinite hanging over us if we but look upward and think. So in the daylight of temporal consolation and prosperity, earth is all to us and Heaven is hid, but in darkness and temptation we find ourselves forsaken and alone, the day gone like a dream, nothing to be seen unless we raise our eyes to the infinite whose glory is hinted to us in those bright stars which, if they do not enlighten our path, at least assure us that there is light if we but wait for it.

CLXVI.

SHUT OUT.

Amen, dico vobis, Nescio vos.

"Amen, I say unto you, I know you not." "One knocked at the beloved's door, and a voice asked from within, 'Who is there?' and he answered, 'It is I.' Then the voice said, 'This house will not hold me and thee.' And the door was not opened. Then went the lover into the desert, and fasted and prayed in solitude. And after a year he returned

and knocked again at the door. And again the voice asked, 'Who is there?' and he said, 'It is thyself.' And the door was opened to him."[1]

We cannot get admittance into the *penetralia* of God's Heart, until we have put off self and put on Christ—seeing as He sees, loving as He loves. Till this conformity is perfect, the lines of our personal demarcation are not yet obliterated, His ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts; the two *Egos*, created and uncreated, are morally distinct and opposed. But when love has broken down every barrier, the only distinctness is psychological, metaphysical; while in affection there is that moral union by which *I* becomes *thyself*. "I in them and Thou in Me, that we may be perfect in one." This union is the fruit of prayer and fasting in the solitude of our mortal life. Fasting, which withdraws our affections from lower things; prayer, which fixes them on higher; solitude, which disencumbers one for this all-important discipline. Then shall we call upon Him and He will hear us, then shall we knock at His Heart and it shall be opened to us.

CLXVII.

SURVIVALS OF GRACE.

Super flumina Babylonis illic sedimus et flevimus cum recordaremur Sion.

"By the rivers of Babylon there we sat and wept, as we thought upon Sion." As life lingers long in the boughs and branches of a tree after

[1] Persian Apologue.

they have been severed from the root and source of renewal, so it seems that the love of the things of God survives the love of God, for whose sake they were first lovable. The old associations of happiness still cling about them; they have come to be loved, in some sort, for themselves, just as the house loved as the home of some dear friend retains the fragrance of friendship long after that friend is departed or turned away. The emotional habits cannot be destroyed in an instant and may long survive the ideas and purposes that occasioned their growth. The beauty of the Sacred Humanity, of the Mystical Spouse, of the Virgin Mother, is not less because we are personally estranged from God. These lingering natural loves are, under God, a grace to lure us back. So the fallen prophet could not resist the surviving love for God and the cause of God which lingered in his heart. He could not bring his sinful lips to utter a curse on Israel, but broke out into praise and blessing: "How goodly are thy tents, O Israel. . . . Let my soul die the death of the just, and let my last end be as his." Yet he died in the ranks of God's enemies, fighting against Israel!

CLXVIII.

COLLECTIVE PRAYER.

Sic ergo vos orabitis: Pater noster.

"Thus therefore shall ye pray: Our Father." Christ would have no solitary prayer, but bids us link all souls of men with our own, as He does on

His Cross, and come as one undivided person before *Our* Father.

> What I do
> And what I dream includes thee, as the wine
> Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue
> God for myself, He hears that name of thine
> And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

Though personally many, and to our eyes disconnected, yet before God all souls are one thing, *i.e.*, elements of an organic whole, each a distinct note in the great chord of everlasting praise whose richness of symphony is impoverished if even one be missing. Singly we are dear to God, but indefinitely more dear in union with others. And so in prayer we are heard more readily when we come to Him grouped round with "those whom He has given us," than when we come alone. Hence the superior efficacy and dignity of public prayer and worship. Where two or three are gathered together in His Name, Christ is with the assembly in a different and closer way than He is with each singly. For this reason the faithful, who are all grouped into one mystical body—the Church, love to group themselves still more specially into subordinate gatherings, into Orders and Congregations, and confraternities; knowing well that whatever ties men closer to one another, ties them closer to God.

CLXIX.

ST. PHILIP.

Jesus dixit ad Philippum: Unde ememus panes ut manducent isti?

"Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" If we knew nothing more of St. Philip than this one incident, it would be a key to the whole man. He is the apostolic-hearted man in quick sympathy with Christ's pity for the starving multitudes in the desert; earnest for their relief, and yet aghast at the scantiness and nothingness of his own abilities and resources. The command is distinct: "Give ye them to eat;" and its very impossibility is a call upon his faith and blind confidence in Him "who knew what He Himself was about to do." Two hundred pennyworth would not suffice even were it at hand; nor will all the accumulated ability and efforts of all the apostolic men in Christendom avail for the feeding of the multitudes except our little be put with faith into His almighty creative hands, and miraculously multiplied and distributed. Then, let us glory in the results if we can.

CLXX.

GOD, OUR LOVER.

Dilectus meus mihi et ego illi.

"My beloved is mine and I am his." It has been said above that the various lovable relations in God are best appreciated by those who have known and tasted their purest counterparts on

earth: his paternity by parents, his friendship by friends, his brotherhood by brothers, his spouse-ship by spouses. In illustration of this, it may be noted how far more fully and truly the following noble utterances of human love might ascend from the heart of man to the Master and Spouse of man's heart:

> I lived with visions for my company
> . . . . years ago,
> And found them gentle mates, nor thought to know
> A sweeter music than they played to me,
> But soon their trailing purple was not free
> Of this world's dust. . . . .
> . . Then Thou Thyself did'st come to *be*,
> Beloved, what they *seemed*. Their shining fronts,
> Their songs, their splendours, . . .
> Met in Thee, and from out Thee overcame
> My soul with satisfaction for all wants—
> Because God's gifts put man's best dreams to shame.

Also:

> And looking on myself I seemed not one
> For such man's love! More like an out-of-tune
> Worn viol, a good singer would be wroth
> To spoil his song with; and which, snatched in haste,
> Is laid down at the first ill-sounding note.
> I did not wrong myself so, but I placed
> A wrong on *Thee*. For perfect strains may float,
> 'Neath master-hands, from instruments defaced.

Also:

> I think of Thee! My thoughts so twine and bud
> About Thee as wild vines about a tree. . .
> Yet, O my palm-tree, be it understood
> I will not have my thoughts instead of Thee
> Who art dearer and better! Rather, instantly
> Renew Thy presence. . . . .

Because in this deep joy to see and hear Thee
And breathe within Thy shadow a new air,
I do not think of Thee—I am too near Thee.

St. Theresa at times seems to have realized this last line. The whole sentiment is that of St. Bernard, whose love was fashioned on the type of the Spouse in the Canticles:

Jesu, dulcis memoria,
Dans vera cordi gaudia,
Sed super mel et omnia,
Ejus dulcis præsentia.

i.e.,

I will not have my thoughts instead of Thee.

And perhaps St. Augustine would have said:

Open Thine heart wide
And fold within the wet wings of Thy dove.

CLXXI.

FAIR LOVE.

Ego Mater pulchræ dilectionis.

"I am the Mother of Fair Love." The same difference exists between Catholic and Puritan worship, whether we look at the outward and visible, or the inward and spiritual. We worship God in the beauty of holiness and set Him forth radiant and attractive with all that speaks to human affection. They strip Him of all that they conceive to savour of the "natural" and accursed, and leave Him incomprehensible and unlovable, because unknowable; repulsive, because inhuman. Our God is altogether human and lovable *Speciosus forma*

præ filiis hominum. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"—so truly is the Sacred Humanity the image and analogue of the Divinity—inadequately, of course, but so far as it goes, most truly. We can say nothing of the Man-Christ that makes Him lovable, approachable, adorable, gentle, that is not true a thousand times more of the Father. And even were the Father no more than we know the Saviour to be, what more should we need? Would it not suffice us? There is a true *dilectio* which is not *pulcra;* which apprehends God substantially as the supreme good and rest of the soul; but which is not delicately appreciative of the beauty of holiness—an utilitarian, serviceable, solid piety—excellent so far as it goes, necessary for all, and the essential basis and recipient of that polish and grace by which it is transformed into *pulcra dilectio.* And there is a *dilectio* which is not merely unattractive, through lack of this finish and refinement; but which is rough, uncouth, repulsive to others—there is a not uncommon stilted, rigid pietarianism, a scandal to the young and buoyant-hearted, repelling them from God; walking slanders on that "easy yoke and light burden;" well-meaning, no doubt, and therefore saving themselves; but as far as others are concerned, soul-destroyers, who were better cast into the sea with a mill-stone round their neck than that they should scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Him. "Suffer the little ones to come unto Me, and forbid them not," was the sentence pronounced on the well-meaning but forbidding piety of certain disciples.

CLXXII.

MOTHER OF MERCY.

Mater misericordiæ.

"Mother of the pitying heart." She could pity all, because she had tasted human sorrow in its bitterest forms, if not in all its forms; the sorrow of forebodings of sorrow, the sorrow of labour, of exile, of perplexity, of separation, of helplessness, of martyring grief, of blank desolation. Sorrow must sour or sweeten us, as we take it. It is God's intent that it should teach us pity.

Many have a tender pity for Mary's seven sorrows, and they do well. Yet to such she would say: "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves." It is for her children and in them that she is pierced with a thousand swords of sorrow. From the foot of the cross she looked out into the future and back upon the past on all the sorrows of her children, and made them all her own and heaped them up with the dying agonies of her First-born, and took them all into her world-wide heart of pity; she, the great Mother of humanity, *Mater misericordiæ.*

CLXXIII.

EYES OF PITY.

Illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte.

"Turn thy pitying eyes upon us." To look away is a sign of displeasure, as from something loathsome; or of contempt, as from something hateful; or of indifference, as from something of no interest. We pretend not to see a troublesome beggar; but he insists on being seen. *Aspice in me*, he says, *et miserere mei*—"Look upon me and pity me." God is only pretending not to hear, that He may get us to cry out louder and become more obstinate and fixed in our purpose; and Mary is full of like artifices.

But Mary's eyes are everlastingly rivetted on the blessed face of God. Is she to turn them thence upon such as we are: from light to darkness; from power to weakness; from beauty to sickly deformity? It is in Him that she sees us; for we are in Him, with all our vileness; in the centre of His unbroken thought, in the core of His undying love; and He is in us as the soul of our soul and life of our life. She cannot but look on us when she looks on Him; she cannot but look on Him when she looks on us. And seeing Him in us, and viewing our wounds and weaknesses as His, the eyes she fixes upon us are eyes of mercy, the Mother's eyes that washed the bleeding Body of the Crucified with a flood of tears. Could we but turn merciful eyes upon our fellow-mortals, and see Christ in all, and all in Christ; could we but view them as Mary views them, with a

larger, kindlier gaze, our cry to her would never be in vain. Has she not good reason to be deaf, to turn away and "look on us no more!"

CLXXIV.

MARY'S WELCOME.

Et Jesum benedictum fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exilium ostende.

"And after our exile show unto us Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb." Nothing frets us more in our keenest moments of enjoyment than the absence of some dear one who would "enter into our joy" and double it, casting back to us the reflex of our own gladness, as mirror answers and re-answers to mirror. Thus every new soul that reaches the Vision of God augments the bliss of all the rest:[1] and if there could be fretfulness or impatience in Heaven, it would be in Mary's tranquil heart, so does she long to have each and all of her children in sympathy with her ecstasy. *Magnificate Dominum mecum*—"Magnify the Lord *with me*," she cries to them, *et exaltemus nomen ejus in idipsum*—"and let us praise His name *together*." As one who shows some beauty to another, and rejoices in his joy, so will she hurry us by the hand into the presence of the Blessed Fruit of her womb, Jesus, watching our eyes as they brighten with that same joy with which her own soul is replenished.

"Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb." How proud and eager the mother is to show her babe to

[1] Cf. Dante's "Ecco chi crescerà li nostri amori." (*Paradiso*, v.)

every one! how greedy of praise on its behalf! Shall not Mary have a mother's pride in the Blessed Fruit of her womb, the pride of authorship, in some sort? Under God, did she not conceive and fashion those sacred limbs day by day; is He not bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh; her very Child, albeit her very God? "From their fruits ye shall know them." May not this tree be proud of its fruit, without trespassing on His right who made the tree and fertilized it? *Fecit mihi magna*—"He has done much for me!" for He fitted the tree to the fruit. His name is none the less holy—*Sanctum nomen ejus*—because hers is blessed for ever—*Ex hoc beatam me dicent*—"From this time all shall call me blessed." *Ex hoc, i.e.*, for all eternity *Ave, Ave, Ave* shall mingle without discord, rather in sweetest concord, with *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus*—each hymn gaining in meaning and melody from the other.

"After this our exile." For everything has its *after* save one alone; darkness and brightness, sorrow and joy, labour and rest. Yet the bright and joyous and restful, if they come and go, will one day come not to go. *Post hiemem æstas, post noctem redit dies, post tempestatem tranquillitas magna*—God is the Summer, the Day, the Calm, that has no after.

What it is to be welcomed home by a mother after a long absence; an absence full of peril, uncertainty, anxiety! In the welcome with which Mary received her risen Son from the dead, we see what is in store for us. "This, my Son, was dead and is alive! was lost and is found." *O clemens! O pia! O dulcis Virgo Maria!*

CLXXV.

SELF-STUDY.

Pravum est cor omnium et inscrutabile; quis cognoscet illud?

"The heart of man is perverse and unsearchable; who shall fathom it?" To live in the objective world, *i.e.*, in the Non-Ego, does not mean material-mindedness, or a life engrossed with persons and causes; but is compatible with a life of pure contemplation. In other words, a contemplative life is not a life of self-contemplation. There is a due self-reserve which excludes self from the inward monologue of the soul, whether as direct object or as ultimate point of reference for every other interest. There is also an excessive self-reserve, gotten sometimes of a semi-consciousness of some deep-seated rottenness, which we shrink from adverting to explicitly lest we should destroy our present precarious peace. We are like one who suspects or even knows the growth of a tumour, yet dares not to look; so different from the hypochondriac, whose fear keeps him always searching and imagining. We must not suppose that diary-keepers have no self-reserve, or "know themselves" better than others do. They nearly always write for an imaginary reader. Not one in a million would dare to write himself down on paper, I do not say as he is, but even as, underneath all varnish, his conscience records him. Perhaps it is more for one's peace, as a rule, to live in the objective and leave the dark and pathless subjective world to God's mercy and, almost, to chance. The verdict on

ourselves will astonish us even more than the verdict on others, when the last shall be first and the first last; and the straight shall be crooked and the crooked straight: when our strength shall be revealed as weakness; our weakness as strength; the mountains as valleys; the valleys as mountains. Let us therefore "judge nothing before the time," least of all ourselves.

CLXXVI.

THE CROSSES OF OTHERS.

Nemo sine onere, nemo sine cruce.

"None without burden, none without cross." To look at the burdens as they are known outwardly, God might seem strangely unequal in dispensing crosses; but this seems less clear when we know all that lies within, and when we consider the burden relatively to the back that has to bear it. Children are crushed to earth with toy-crosses. What measure can we possibly apply to the enjoyment or suffering of others? Certainly not the occasion which gives birth to it; certainly not external manifestations of it; not even the energy put forth to secure joy, to ward off suffering. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness," and God, the heart's Maker and Mover. No one else.

CLXXVII.

INTUITION.

Revelasti ea parvulis.

"Thou hast revealed them to little ones." Our clearest moments of insight are often those

when, through weakness and weariness, our mind is least under control, when concentration and voluntary attention is least possible; when reason slumbers, but spiritual vision is still awake and alert. It looks as though the soul were a clear pond which when least ruffled reflects heaven more deeply and truly; receiving passively in a moment what reason, with its bustling activity, misses after hours or years of searching. Reason is to the mirror of the mind what the motor muscles are to the eye. They do not see or give light, but bring light and vision together. But the listless gaze takes in the whole as whole, while attentive scrutiny accumulates a host of unconnected details. God spoke to His "seers" of old in such moments of spiritual rapture and abstraction, when, under the influence of music, or other tranquillizing agencies, the mind was stilled to a burnished sea of silver. It is generally observed that the moment of passage from sleep to waking, or from waking to sleep, is one of brighter intuition; that children and simple folk divine many truths which sophisticated minds muddle over vainly; and that truth, like happiness, is coy, and flies from those who seek her directly or too anxiously.

CLXXVIII.

A JEALOUS GOD.

Deposuit potentes de sede.

"He hath dethroned the mighty and raised up the lowly." Æschylus was sent to unteach that low conception of God which figures Him

as envious of man's bliss and prosperity. It is not prosperity, but the pride and independence which prosperity breeds, the insolence of elation, that brings curses in its train. He but anticipated; *Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles.* The oldest calumny against God is that of envy; "God knoweth that in the day ye shall eat thereof ye shall be as gods." The devil must paint God in his own colours, in his own form; as thirsting for pre-eminence and fearing eclipse. Like any successful slander, it has a shadow of truth about it. "I the Lord thy God *am* a jealous God;" jealous for our happiness, which can be found only in the love of Him; and which is imperilled by being based on any good less stable; jealous, since in some mysterious way He, the self-sufficing, has become dependent on our love and hungers for it all, and will not give that glory to another. Perhaps the recognition of calamity as, not merely the penalty of pride, but as a positive means to the higher beatitudes, is more distinctively Christian. *Beati pauperes* is an advance on *Væ divitibus.*

CLXXIX.

THE GRACE OF UTTERANCE.

Domine, labia mea aperies et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam.

"Lord, Thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall give forth Thy praise." How disappointing it is to bring some one to share our enthusiasm about a landscape or poem or work of art, and to find that he lags behind our

own eager interest, that the words of sympathy are but formal, faint, perishing in the birth! This is the aggravation, which Augustine describes[1] at his own inability to make others see God and His Kingdom as he himself saw Him. The defect here is largely due to one's impotence in expression; and not only to the untrained and unprepared condition of the mind we would speak to. This he observes somewhere, commenting on *Domine, labia mea aperies, et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam.* It were the art of arts, the poetry of poetries, to set forth God as David, or Isaias; Augustine or Bernard. No doubt the recipient mind, too, has its impassable limits which no training can stretch.

"May God make this world to you, my child, as beautiful as it has been to me." So William Blake, in his poverty and old age, to a little child. This is analogous to the prayer and longing of Divine charity in the heart of those who have seen God's beauty revealed in the higher and more beautiful realms of grace. They long for sympathy, they are restless to make others partners of their joy, to carry them with them and make them see as they see, feel as they feel. "May God make Himself to you as beautiful as He has been to me," is the embodiment of their love, the term of their endeavour.

[1] Doc. Christ. i. 29.

CLXXX.

ENLIGHTENMENT.

Deus lux est et in eo tenebræ non sunt ullæ.

"God is Light, and in Him darkness there is none." That we must civilize before we can Christianize is a proposition which shocks certain well-meaning persons. It also seems out of harmony with facts. It is, however, only a less usual form of the truth that the *Ascensio mentis in Deum* is *per scalam creaturarum*—it is by the ladder of creation that the mind climbs up to God. As regards the knowledge of God all are here agreed. Only so far as I know what wisdom, power, goodness are in creatures, can I ascribe these attributes, magnified to infinity, to the Fountain of Being. Other faculties and a wider knowledge of creation would enlarge and fill in my ideas of the Divinity. Although in outline the conception of the Divinity is the same for all intelligent monotheists, yet in point of colouring and detail no two men wholly agree. But man's development is not merely in his conception of God; but still more in his affection towards God, which, however, is largely conditioned by certain conceptions. To purify his affection and to acquire a "taste" for God is the end of man's temporal probation. This process is no less dependent on the use of creatures, which are the instruments of our education. Speculative knowledge in general and "taste" are not convariants. It is a sensitive perception of goodness and beauty and a schooling of the appetites, affec-

tions, and emotions into responsiveness to such pure stimulus that constitutes moral progress; the *recta sapere*, relish of right. We must be trained to discern and relish the lovableness of finite sharings of the Divine goodness, before we can raise our affection to their source. He who does not love order, peace, harmony, gentleness, generosity, justice, truthfulness, restraint, and all beautiful and noble qualities as revealed in creatures, how can he be moved to love God for the sake of such attributes in their infinitude? How can they appeal to him? "If he love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" If these qualities fail to affect him when they are visibly present, how shall their distant archetypes, known only by inference or faith, stir his heart's love?

According as our "relish of the right" is more or less cultivated shall we be disposed towards the subsistent Rightness. The most barbarous and crude ideals find the realization of whatever good they contain in God and in Christ; but what gods and what Christs are these—the magnified images of their worshippers? One may have, and often has, the condition without the effect; but never the effect without the condition. Civilization and culture may be pagan or agnostic; but Christianity is never stably founded in barbarism and darkness. If facts seem ever to have been adverse, it was either that the darkness of those times was really light; or the light of that religion really darkness. For "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."

CLXXXI.

ECONOMY OF TRUTH.

Ut det illis in tempore tritici mensuram.[1]

"That he may give them corn in due measure and season." He is the true doctor or teacher who follows God's own economy; who is a faithful and foresighted dispenser of truth, *i.e.*, of the corn of the souls; who metes it out with regard to times and persons and capacities; who considers the *zeitgeist*, and the psychological climate of the country. Such is the Church herself, the teacher of all times and nations. She has yet "many things to tell us, but we cannot bear them now."

"How can we sing the Lord's song in the land of strangers?" *i.e.*, to those whose tongue, whose conceptions, whose sympathies are foreign to our own. What do they know of Sion or the songs of Sion, that we should waste our breath upon them? By Babylon's waters we may sit and weep, when we remember the City of God; but to hymn its glories in the hearing of the profane would be to cast pearls before swine to be trampled underfoot. "As for our harps, we hanged them up on the willows that were therein." The like economy may be observed with regard to all that we hold in any way sacred or dear: the economy of silence *in terra alienâ*.

[1] Mass of Holy Doctors.

CLXXXII.

STEADFAST PEACE.

Funda nos in pace.

"'Stablish us in peace." Peace of soul may be founded on the sands or on the rock; nor can one tell which while calm endures. It was when the windy tempest of affliction blew and the rain descended and the floods came and the storm beat against her on Calvary, that Mary stood—*Stabat juxta crucem*—like Mount Sion, the City of Peace: *Sicut Mons Sion non commovebitur in æternum.* What trifles upset us and cast us into the blues; what trifles elate and excite us! Doubtless this surface agitation is compatible with calm in the depths; but it is not a good symptom. What is it 'stablishes the rocks and mountains, but their weight? Levity or lightness is the symbol of unsteadiness. And what is weight, but a strong draw to the centre? *Funda nos in pace, i.e.*, enlarge our heart, that it may be drawn more forcibly, more irresistibly to God, our Centre.

CLXXXIII.

ST. AUGUSTINE.

Agnos in sinu levabit, fœtas ipse portabit.

He carrieth the weakly in His arms, and gently leadeth those that are with young. Some are too weak to walk at all or to guide themselves, and if God does not carry them they must perish. Others need his gentlest leading because they are burdened with others whom they are bringing forth to Christ. Of all souls these are the dearest to Him. Less encumbered, their strength would enable them to leap and run, but for His sake they are content to move slowly and laboriously, as those who carry some frail burden. He will not let such be left behind, but will slacken His pace to theirs. He will not hurry nor drag them on roughly. Such are souls of "distinction," men like Augustine, whom God foresees pregnant with the spiritual life of millions.

CLXXXIV.

INTERCESSION.

Amice, commoda mihi tres panes, quoniam amicus meus venit de via ad me.

"Friend, lend me three loaves, for my friend has come to me and I have nothing to give him." And will God, can God be deaf to us when we importune Him in behalf of our friends in their sudden necessities? We have nothing to give them, no bread for their hunger. They come to

us in the darkness of night, houseless and helpless; they cast themselves upon our love. We must rise and open and welcome them, whencesoever or whenever they come. We must go out in the chill night and knock and beg and borrow at the gate of Heaven, where the "Giver of all," reposes with His children in the rest of eternity. To be importuned by a friend for a friend, is such music in His ears, that He will not answer us lest we should desist. Not till He is sated with the melody of our pleading love, will He rise and give bread in abundance—not three loaves, but food for a multitude if need be. "*Much more* will your Heavenly Father give." Lord, my friend hath come to me on his journey and I have naught to give him. Lend me bread. *Panem nostrum quotidianum commoda nobis hodie.* It shall be all returned. Returned? Is it not for Thyself, Lord?

CLXXXV.

SIMPLICITY.

Vitam præsta puram.

"Grant a pure life"—a life dominated by one single, simple love, consecrated habitually to God, so as to serve Him even as we breathe the air, unconsciously, without knowing it. "Lord, when saw we Thee hungry and fed Thee?" We often love God best when we are least conscious of it; our whole spirit is saturated by His influence, as a crystal with light. Inchoative love expresses itself in definite acts and services, consciously rendered,

but the formed habit of perfect love is only felt when something discordant presents itself, as the atmosphere is felt only when it is fouled or disturbed. Our habitual love of our parents or brethren is not conscious till separation or death, or some other crisis, puts it to the test. The purest love is the least reflex, the simplest; and love is life. "Grant a pure life."

CLXXXVI.

SACRAMENTAL UNION.

Corpus Tuum quod sumpsi, et Sanguis quem potavi, adhæreat visceribus meis.

"Let Thy Body which I have taken, and Thy Blood which I have drunk, cleave to my heart." May it cleave to our affections, which are the inmost receptacle of the heart into which Christ is received to be assimilated and worked into the very fibre of our soul; His thoughts and feelings and ways and tastes intertwining with ours, as the vine with the elm, till none can tell which is which, or where one begins and the other ends, till their separation becomes a moral impossibility.

CLXXXVII.

FORGETFUL HEARERS.

Ne obliviscaris verborum quæ viderunt oculi tui.

"Let not my heart forget what mine eye hath seen." We pray for light, and cry out, *Domine, ut videam*—"Lord, may I see," and when we get it, we

neither feed nor trim nor fend the flame. The devil comes and takes away the seed out of our hearts; rather, from beside it, for it has not half an inch of earth over it. Light is to be fostered and fed. It is truly a seed; something with indefinitely fruitful contents; not given for a moment's admiration, like a shooting star, but for use, like a lamp. "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." It is a thing to carry and keep, not to leave behind after its first use. Here Mary is our teacher, who kept all God's sayings, and pondered them in her heart.

CLXXXVIII.

COLLECTIVE PRAISE.

Iter para tutum, ut videntes Jesum, semper collætemur.

"Secure us a safe journey, that we may ever rejoice together in the vision of Jesus." The end of a pure life and a safe journey is the vision of God, *Vita æterna, ut cognoscant Te Deum verum, et quem misisti Jesum Christum.*

Collætemur, i.e., a *sympathetic* rejoicing in a common good; the joy of that whole mystical body whereof we are members; of one living organism which sees itself with a million eyes, yet with but one vision; loves itself with a million hearts, yet with but one love; where the blessedness of the whole is more desired by each part than its own share in that blessedness. *Collætemur, i.e.*, in one song of many parts, like Dante's heavenly eagle, which poured forth from its one throat the collective praises of the countless souls whereof it was composed—

Methought I heard
The murmuring of a river, that doth fall
From rock to rock transpicuous; making known
The richness of its spring-head; and as sound
Of cittern, at the fret-board, or of pipe
Is, at the wind-hole, modulate and tuned;
Thus up the neck, as it were hollow, rose
That murmuring of the eagle, and forthwith
Voice there assumed, and thence along the beak
Issued in form of words such as my heart
Did look for; on whose tables I inscribed them.[1]

I saw, and heard an utterance from the beak
Whereof the outward words said "I" and "Mine,"
Albeit the inward thought was "We" and "Our."[2]

Even so the joy of every member of the mystic Christ is diffused throughout the whole, from the heart, into which it is all poured back again, as into a very ocean of joy, in the sound of whose swell its tributary streams are silenced. It is of this joint praise that the Church sings in her Prefaces: *Collaudare, benedicere, et predicare;* and *cum quibus et nostras voces, ut admitti jubeas deprecamur.* He is less than man, or more than God, who would care to sit at a banquet alone—"a brute, or else a god," says Aristotle, who himself never guessed that even God's self-sufficingness could not make solitude happy, or that the essential beatitude of God required the friendship of Three, or that love in a personal subject must rest, not in abstract truth or goodness, but in a personal object, *i.e.*, must be a fellowship in joy and praise.

[1] Cary's Dante, *Par.* xx. [2] *Ibid. Par.* xix.

CLXXXIX.

THE SECRET OF POWER.

Dedisti et potestatem omnis carnis.

"Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life." It was by taking flesh that the Eternal Son acquired power over all flesh; and we, just so far as we are human, have power more or less over all flesh. Human character, in the fulness of its possibilities, or as it is in the Divine ideal, is only participated in various aspects, shades, and degrees, by individuals. It is by stealing an attribute, or quality, in its higher perfection from this quarter and that; by running through the history of earth's greatest, that we can to some extent piece together the full humanity realized in Christ, who alone had power over *all* flesh; not over only this or that class, or temperament, or disposition.

CXC.

GOD'S GLORY.

Sive ergo manducatis sive bibitis sive aliud quid facitis, omnia in gloriam Dei facite.

"Whether ye eat or drink or do anything else, do it all to the glory of God." The immanence of God in all goodness and righteousness, His permeating presence, will become more habitually sensible by active obedience to the Divine instincts of our reason. It is God who gives us the perception and love of right in every depart-

ment, however trivial soever; but being *free* instruments, we can choose the less perfect or the base—being deaf, so to say, to grace. For beyond the limits of obligation, the region of supererogation in ethical, ascetical, and moral refinements, stretches almost out of our sight. The artist, or poet, or musician, should recognize that "the best" is the most Divine; it is the cause of God. As Nature, with all her limitations, strives blindly to realize the Divine ideas as perfectly as possible (*i.e.*, the Ideal), so should art do, consciously and freely. Not only in fine art, but in the useful arts, and in all practical matters, the best is the most Divine, the most God-pleasing. It is God uttered, rather, uttering Himself, most freely and graciously. For it is He who works in us and through us to His own praise and glory. At best, we are poor instruments, monochord, trichord, at most, decachord; but we make ourselves still worse.

CXCI.

THE CHALICE.

Calix meus inebrians quam præclarus est.

"My overflowing chalice, how glorious it is!" The Chalice speaks to us by a better symbolism than the Host of the extravagance and prodigality of Divine love. It is the very outpouring of the Sacred Heart. To shed one's blood for one's country, for one's friend, to pour out one's life, is the proper act and embodiment of love in its extremity, and delirium. It is as feeding her little ones with her

heart's blood that the pelican symbolizes the Divine Love. Love is truly an inebriety, however purism may fear the figure. It is reckless and improvident, "giving and not counting the cost, fighting and not heeding the wounds." It is doubtless the inebriating character of wine that made it, more than any other cup, an apt symbol and sacrament of the Sacred Blood, "that wine which maketh glad the heart of a man." For love is like a fire which begets love: and it is God's love, poured out to the last drop, and squandered upon us, that, once comprehended, inebriates us, communicates to us the Divine passion, or enthusiasm. For if every lover seems little better than a fool or a drunkard to those for whom love is a mystery, is it wonderful if God's extravagances should seem mere inebriety to our cold, narrow hearts?

CXCII.

MILK FOR BABES.

Perfectorum autem est solidus cibus.

"Solid food for matured minds." A child who had no one to instruct him might be reasonably alarmed at the loss of his milk-teeth, as if it were a sign of premature decay. Normally, in our first stage of spiritual growth we are simply breast-fed, wholly dependent on others for our beliefs and bents; then, when reason first wakes (that is, spiritual reason, for each kind of reason develops independently to some extent, one quite dormant, while another is active and mature), we begin to be self-feeding,

leaving the milk of babes for solid food; and we imagine that this is a final state till, to our dismay, our milk-teeth drop out one by one, and we seem to collapse into infantine helplessness. Our first independent theories and schemes of spirituality are provisionally useful, no doubt, but they must give way one by one, to be replaced by those that are sounder, better rooted in fact and experience, and our wisdom-teeth are the last to appear. They say some never cut them. This is the law of progress in every science; both for the individual and for the race. It should not surprise us to find it prevailing in the science of the saints.

CXCIII.

CAUSE OF OUR JOY.

Causa nostræ lætitiæ.

"Cause of our joy." As Aaron's rod that budded, so is the country in full spring glory compared with the black waste of two months before. And all this life and beauty is the response of bountiful mother-earth to the call of Heaven, to the softening rain and the fostering sunshine. We may well contrast what is, with what would have been, had not Mary responded to Heaven's call; had not the Holy Ghost come upon her and the power of the Highest overshadowed her; had not the heavens shed their dew from on high and rained down justice from the clouds, and loosened the closed earth and let salvation bud forth. All this Paradise which the Church has made on earth, with its wealth of

flower and fruit, its fragrances, its songs, its rich rivers, is from the *fiat* of our *Alma Mater*—"Our Bounteous Mother!" *Virgo concipiet et pariet.* She is in very deed, *Causa nostræ lætitiæ*—the cause of our spring gladness.

Magnificate Dominum mecum et simul exaltemus nomen ejus. She invites us to cast all our personal graces and favours together into one great heap with hers and those of her Divine Son and of all the saints; to forget all distinction of "mine and thine," and, as one soul, to join her in her *Magnificat anima mea Dominum.*

CXCIV.

GOD'S INDWELLING.

Si quis diligit me, Pater meus diliget eum; et ad eum veniemus et mansionem apud eum faciemus.

"If any man love Me, My Father will love him; and we will come to him and make our abode with him." After all, Patmore has said nothing stronger than this; if anything can be censured as too strong, in the face of such extravagances of Divine passion as the Eucharist reveals. "Spiritual" is such a chill, ghostly word with us, that we forget that the superhuman spirit includes all and more than our complexus of body and soul. Man's spirit is a broken-winged, lame affair apart from its framework; soul and body are more truly parts of a whole, than man and wife; one indeed is principal, but each helpless without the other, fruitless, lonely. Superhuman spirits are all and more

than body and soul together. God's love is a passionate, feeling love in an eminent sense; not a mere intellectual valuation, as abstract theodicy would represent it.

"If any man keep My word, My Father will love him," for, so far, there will be in him the image of the *Filius Dilectus*, of the Only-Begotten, whose aspect draws from the Father that sigh of sated love, which is the Holy Spirit. The "word" of Christ is "spirit and life;" it is the living impress of His mind on our mind, and of His heart on our heart. It is "kept" by those who are studious, not to lose, but to foster and develop it: "putting on Christ" ever more closely. In them the Father sees once more His reflex, and is drawn to those, whom He draws, that they may draw Him still more.

"And we will come to him." We, Father, Son, and Spirit. Such is the spell, the fascination our poor, feeble spirit, when once it is magnetized by love, can exercise over the Immovable, Immutable, Self-sufficing Three, who are to each other all in all. *Trahe me post te*—"Draw Me after thee," He says to her—*et in odorem curremus unguentorum tuorum*—"and we will follow in the fragrance of thy unguents," as a bee is drawn by a flower, and follows its fragrance like a silken clue. *Dum esset Rex in accubitu suo nardus mea dedit odorem suavitatis*—"While the King was reclining, my spikenard breathed forth its sweet odour." God was at rest from all eternity until He made the soul of man, and then His repose was gone; the odour of its

sweetness roused Him from that slumber, and He came forth—*tamquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo; exultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam*—"as a bridegroom from his chamber, rejoicing as a giant to run his course." Not even its darkness and disfigurement could conceal from His piercing gaze that ineffaceable presentment of Himself, however begrimed by sin. *Nigra sum sed formosa*, foul in fact, but fair in capacity, *ideo dilexit me Rex*, wherefore the King is enamoured of me; as

> Should a high King, leaving his arduous throne,
> Sue from her hedge a little gipsy maid,
> For far-off royal ancestry bewrayed
> By some wild beauties, to herself unknown.

If these "wild beauties," traces of royal ancestry, our unknown possibilities and capacities—"some power of growing king-like"—exert such a charm over the King of souls, much more will the fairness of the soul win Him when she has already learnt the manners of the Court of Heaven when, like Esther, purified, anointed, and clad in queenly tire, *formosa valde et incredibili pulcritudine*—"fair and graceful beyond belief," she is brought into His presence.

"And we will make our abode with him," and be at home with him; with no wish, no intention of ever departing; holding quiet, familiar intercourse; insensible, because so habitual; sinking into the heart as water into a sponge; settling down softly as a dove into its warm nest. *Hæc est sedes mea in sæculum sæculi; hic habitabo quoniam elegi eam*—"This

is My resting-place for ever and ever. Here will I dwell; because I have elected it."

CXCV.

MORE THAN A BROTHER.

Ecce rogavi te et audire me noluisti; rogavi Deum meum et audivit me.[1]

"I asked thee to hear me, and thou wouldst not; I asked my God, and He heard me." God is more sympathetic than any saint, even than the tenderest of them all. There is one that cleaveth closer than a brother. *Pater meus et mater mea dereliquerunt me, Dominus autem assumpsit me*—"My father and my mother have forsaken me, but our Lord has taken me up."

CXCVI.

THE FINDING IN THE TEMPLE.

Et ipsi non intellexerunt verbum quod locutus est ad eos.

(1) "His parents knew it not," and "they understood not the saying." We think we have a right to understand God's doings, to see some coming issue, spiritual or otherwise; not content with the assurance that all is co-operant to final good, we fancy that we can follow the workings of Divine wisdom. Far nobler is the faith that *believes*, but does not ask to *see*. If Mary and Joseph were treated with seeming inconsiderateness, if they received enigmatical explanations which they, with their spiritual insight, could not understand, are we

[1] Scholastica to Benedict. See *Brev. Rom.*

to be impatient because God's "wisdom is inscrutable and His ways past finding out"?

(2) God does not *willingly* afflict them, but "is a Father who pities," while He chastens. Although He knows it is for our eventual good, yet He feels for our present sorrow. Are we not too philosophical as regards the sufferings of others, and wont to excuse our indifference on the score that it will do them good in the end? Did Mary feel the sword of compassion less keenly because she foresaw the future glory of Easter as the issue of Calvary?

(3) How could they fail to find who "sought Him with their whole heart" and sought Him in His Temple? If He strikes unwillingly, how willingly He heals! "I have forsaken thee for a little moment, but in great mercy will I gather thee." "Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." And so after three days absence, He returns with them, hand in hand, to Nazareth, to console them for many years.

CXCVII.

WATER AND WINE.

Nuptiæ factæ sunt in Cana.

"And there was a marriage at Cana."

(1) Between the austerity of the Baptist and the

"Humanity" of our Saviour there is no real incompatibility or difference of principle. John in the desert, girt with his leathern girdle, clad in rough hair-cloth, fed on locusts and honey, solitary, far removed from human life and joys and cares; and Christ at the marriage-feast, eating and drinking like others, attractive to all, "friend of publicans and sinners," charged with gluttony and wine-bibbing—both are animated by one principle, one spirit, one wisdom, who is justified in all her true children, who, however seemingly diverse, on closer scrutiny show the features of their common mother. She is manifested in the darkness no less than in the light; she knows that there is a time for penance and weeping, and a time for praise and rejoicing. And the Church, filled with the same wisdom, manifests, in due place and season, a like unity and variety of conduct, and merits from the captious world the reproaches of both Christ and of His forerunner; the sensual and frivolous are scandalized at her severity; the pharisaic and rigorous at her "humanity" and indulgence to human weakness; the former find her too heavenly; the latter, too earthly.

(2) Christ has not come to destroy human nature, but to fulfil, to perfect, to elevate. He promises it "an hundred-fold *in this life*, and in the world to come life everlasting;" and it is through the cross of self-abnegation that this hundred-fold present perfection is to be secured, even as the fruitfulness of the vine is increased by pruning and training. He who knows what is in man, and needs not that

any should tell Him, being Himself Man, and "holding nothing human indifferent"—He knows that pleasures and enjoyments are in some degree as needful for us as the air we breathe or the food we eat; and this is true even of the merely animal relaxations of the senses and the body, still more of the pleasures of perception, of thought, of affection. All these He touched, used, sanctified, and blessed, that they might be to us sacraments and graces unto life eternal. Thus at the very opening of His Ministry to man we find Him with His Blessed Mother and His disciples, sanctifying by His presence the marriage-feast of Cana—not merely tolerating, but by miraculous intervention furthering and approving harmless mirth and conviviality.

(3) *Et Mater Jesu erat ibi*—"and the Mother of Jesus was there." She was there formally, as His Mother and the Mother of His; to care for His interests and for theirs; to mediate between the two; watching with an anxious eye that nothing might be wanting to complete the happiness of those around her; that the cup of their joy might be full to brim and running over; in readiness, by the side of her Divine Son, to whisper in His ear, and tell Him all their needs: *Vinum non habent*—"They have no wine." And she was there in the interests of Jesus, that all might be according to His will; that nature might have no blemish unfitting it to be a receptacle of grace; that the water might be pure and fresh and undefiled, nor unworthy to be divinely changed to wine; that the mirth and gladness might be so

chastened by reason as to be apt matter for supernatural merit; that the marriage itself might be a fit emblem of the union of Christ and His Church, and a means of grace to both bridegroom and bride for perseverance in the same sacred relationship. *Mater Jesu erat ibi.* This is Mary's mediatorial office; she turns to Jesus with, *Vinum non habent*—"They have no wine," and to us with, "Whatsoever He shall say unto you, that do ye."

(4) And so everywhere it is by the presence of Mary that life's feast is hallowed, and Jesus and His disciples brought into it as welcome guests. It is through the presence of Mary that Christian art and literature have been spiritualized, retaining all that was truly beautiful in pagandom, and purging out all that was "earthly, sensuous, devilish." Where Jesus and Mary, the Woman and her Child, have found entrance, all impurity has fled away like a mist before the sun; and where the door has been shut in their face, corruption, decay, dishonour, death, have slowly eaten their way in. Where they are not, wine is but water; the noblest efforts are cramped and paralyzed, shut up in the limits of the finite and the realistic. What was made "to gladden the heart of man" proves vapid or even poisonous if aught be there which would bring a blush on the cheek of the Virgin Mother of Jesus. Let them but enter, and the cave becomes a royal palace; water turns to wine: the weakness of man's puny conceptions is strengthened, ennobled, substantially transformed by the infusion of the Divine elements of faith and purity.

(5) "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God" does not forbid our seeking in due turn and measure those things which "the Gentiles seek;" but only our seeking them *as* the Gentiles seek them, *i.e.*, first, as the chiefest good. "Your Heavenly Father *knoweth that you have need* of these things;" and even if He who made us, with all our senses, passions, affections, and desires; who moves in our every movement, and thinks in our every thought—even if He could possibly forget these natural needs of ours, there is our Incarnate Lord pleading for us with His all-human Heart, beating in unison with our own, throb for throb; and if, again, even He could forget us, there is Mary ever at the side next His Heart, to lean over and whisper in His ear: "*Vinum non habent*—'They have no wine.' Their heart is sad, their spirits drooping; they are lonely, afflicted, poor, distressed, neglected—*vinum non habent*." And there are ministering angels ready at her beck and call to perform the will of her Divine Son.

(6) We "have *need* of all these things," of health and sufficiency, of friends and companions, of the bright sunshine and the flowers and the birds, woods and rivers, mountains and valleys; of all that speaks to us of the goodness, kindness, beauty, and grace of divinity; of all that will help us to bear up against the sadness inseparable from our mortal state, to sweeten our bitterness, and smooth our roughness. All are graces, good gifts helpful to life eternal, to be sought, not before nor counter to God's Kingdom, but in order to it. He who taught

us to pray, *Sanctificetur nomen tuum; adveniat regnum tuum; fiat voluntas tua,* bids us to go on: *Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie.*

CXCVIII.

MARY'S FIAT.

Quella, ch' ad aprir l'alto amor volse la chiave.[1]

"She who turned the key which unlocked the deep love," *i.e.*, as Eve stretched forth her hand at Satan's bidding and unlocked the flood-gates of sin, sorrow, and death, so Mary at Gabriel's word, by her *fiat mihi*, opens "the windows of Heaven and the fountains of the great deep," and deluges the world with the cleansing flood of Divine love, till then, pent up and longing to burst forth, longing to "rend the heavens and come down" in torrents upon the earth.

In Mary with her Babe at her breast; in Mary broken-hearted by the Cross of her Son; in Mary clasping her risen Jesus; in Mary reigning by His side in Heaven, we see the great all-Mother of humanity, a conception dimly shadowed in the dark gropings of the pagan mind, in Cybele and Gara and many another, but fully realized in the one true religion of humanity where, "taught by God," the human soul can express its deepest yearnings, and recognize them as implanted by Him who can satisfy them beyond what eye hath seen, ear heard, or heart conceived. Those childish dreams of untaught sinful humanity, mingled with much that

[1] *Purgatorio*, x.

was fair and noble, more that was foul and degrading; but in the reality which the Catholic religion gives us, in the great Mother of God and of man, we find verified the eternal principle that, whatever is really beautiful is also either true or less than the truth. It is Humanity that she bears in her womb, suckles at her breast, tends and nurtures and protects. It is Humanity that she holds in her arms, and about which she casts her sheltering mantle, as she stands, Queen of the whole earth, with her foot upon the destroyer's head. It is by the Cross of Crucified Humanity that she stands weeping; it is risen and glorified Humanity that she welcomes from the dead; and it is with ascended Humanity that she reigns for evermore.

CXCIX.

ST. PAUL.

Saule, Saule, quid me persequeris?

"Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute Me?" It is a prominent feature in St. Paul to identify Christ and Christ's. As he persecuted Christ in His little ones, so they are the recipients of his penitential love and passionate devotion. Like Magdalene, it is upon the feet of Christ he expends his tears, his spikenard, the service of all God has given him; for the Head has made all his debts of love, pity, and reparation payable to the feet. There is the place for penitents to sit.

Paul does not turn from a life of immorality to a life of morality, by a sort of ethical conversion. Morally he was as correct as any good Pharisee could be. But he turns from theological hatred of our Saviour to personal love: and this is the essence of Christian sanctification. It is *de facto* a morally

perfect life, but formally it is a life of love which never thinks of reason or of the rules of right living; but as the brutes live blindly according to Divine reason, so the love of Christ carries all morality with it instinctively.

CC.

PRAISE AND THANKS.

Bonum est confiteri Domino et psallere nomini tuo Altissime.

"It is good to give thanks to God and to praise His name." Two distinct duties, praise and thanksgiving: thanksgiving for what God is to me; praise for what He is to Himself.

Ad annuntiandum mane misericordiam tuam—"To tell Thy mercy in the morning," *i.e.*, in the early morning of life or of spiritual life, when all is bright and fair and full of hope, before the shadows have fallen and experience has tempered our sanguine expectations; or else, in the morning of repentance which follows the night of sin, when the light of grace dawns upon us once more; or, generally, in all times of special favour, consolation, and blessing. It is good at such times to see in all our joy only God's mercy and free forgiveness, and to say, *Unde hoc mihi?*—to "announce it" to ourselves and before God in the silence of our heart.

Et veritatem tuam per noctem—"And Thy truth in the night." It is a good thing to praise the justice of God in times of darkness, temptation, and calamity; when His ways are hidden, perplexing, obscure; to say, "Just is the Lord and terrible," "It is the Lord; let Him do as seemeth good to

Him." For if He afflicts, it is in truth and justice —He,

> Who made the darkness and the light,
> And dwells, not in the light alone,
> But in the darkness and the cloud.

CCI.

ALL MEN LOVABLE.

Ut diligatis invicem sicut ego dilexi vos.

"That you should love one another as I have loved you." Although in individuals the capacity for happiness, in spite of a certain specific agreement, differs both in kind and degree, yet each does possess radically a capability of being indefinitely happier than he is. This happiness-capacity is what appeals to that purest kindness, or *amor benevolentiæ*, which takes delight in the contemplation of happiness for its own sake, as an end in itself; which loves a man rather for what he can be, than for what he is. The "happiness" in question is the true happiness of a spiritual creature, and in the last analysis means its final perfection or spiritual beauty. This love, therefore, is not inspired by the present excellence or lovableness of our neighbour, but by his perfectibility, as the sculptor loves the rude block for what he knows it may become under his chisel, or as God loves chaos in the physical or the spiritual or the supernatural order, and broods over it and says, "Let there be light." Because we are potentially lovable, God loves us, and makes us actually lovable. In all cases He loves His own ideal, which He purposes to realize in us.

It is greater skill which deals with more difficult and stubborn matter, and detects a possible beauty latent in that which is crabbed and deformed. This skill carried to infinity exists in the Divine Artist who from nothing can draw forth all things "by that power wherewith He can subdue all things unto Himself." And as we love most what costs us most, so God's special love is for His specially difficult subjects in whose perfection He is most glorified. In their case what He loves is not merely the possibility of such faith, such happiness; but of such faith in one by nature so sceptical and narrow-minded; such hope in one so pusillanimous and despondent; such love in one so weakly selfish; such light in one so bewildered, confused, and darkened; *Nam virtus in infirmitate perficitur.* Our charity, therefore, is more akin to God's when we love others, not because they are lovable, but in order that they may become lovable.

CCII.

LAZARUS.

Nemo illi dabat.

"And no man gave unto him" (*sc.*, to the beggar Lazarus). Christ's suffering and poverty had no interest for the Jews. He lay at their doorstep, covered with sores, unknown, despised, neglected, hungering in vain for the crumbs of their faith, love, and kind compassion. Their temporal ambition, their legalist self-sufficiency, their worldliness caused them to forget God and His needs;

even as we, when all goes well with us in body and soul, cease to enter into His passion and poverty, or that of His members.

Canes veniebant—"The dogs came." Our very animal nature, with its wants and pains, should create in us a sympathy for the bodily wants of others, were not its impulse of pity so perverted and destroyed by reflex selfishness that even the dumb beasts put us to shame in the matter. *Sed et lamiæ nudaverunt mammam; lactaverunt catulos suos; filia populi mei crudelis quasi struthio in deserto*—"Yea, the sea-monsters have bared the breast and given suck to their young; but My people is as cruel as the ostrich in the desert." The very Gentiles and pagans (*canes*), Pilate and the Centurion, had more pity for our Saviour than the Jews; and it was the Samaritan who bound up his wounds and poured in oil and wine, when priest and levite passed him by. Some who have far less claim on Him than we have, take more pity upon Him; and the compassion which pagans, agnostics, and even bad Christians have for the temporal infirmities, pains, and sorrows of their fellow-men, shames us who profess to see in these afflictions the very wounds of Christ's Mystical Body.

"The poor man died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." Christ, the true Lazarus, the "poor man," ascends into Heaven to Abraham's bosom, the bosom of the Eternal Father from which He came forth. And in Him all His poor and needy members have been carried up, *cum*

Lazaro quondam paupere,[1] to the bosom of Abraham, to be comforted, while the merciless are tormented. Even on earth, wherever the Spirit of Christ has made itself felt, the poor, the afflicted, the suffering, have been raised up from the mire to share such honour as the Cross itself receives from time to time from the great of this world. The Maundy was not a fruitless ceremony in the ages of faith. But the spirit of paganism is altogether inhuman—dead even to brute-instincts of pity.

Goethe tells us that "before the Queen's [Marie Antoinette's] arrival the very rational regulation had been made, that no deformed persons, no cripples or disgusting invalids should show themselves on her route."[2] If there is not more religion, there is at least more humanity in our own century, and no European potentate in these days would risk his popularity by such a "rational regulation." The King Himself never seemed so glorious to enlightened eyes as when thronged with the blind, the lame, the lepers, and the afflicted of all sorts, pressing upon Him to touch him, *et virtus ex illo exibat et sanabat omnes*. Perhaps godless humanitarianism with all its follies may, like the pagan philosophies of old, attune men's ears to the fuller music of the Gospel, and prepare the way for an intelligent return to Christ on the part of those who have left Him in ignorance, because they never knew Him.

[1] Burial Service. [2] Goethe's *Autobiography*.

CCIII

OUR LATENT CAPACITIES.

Ut resuscites gratiam Dei quæ est in te.

"Stir up the grace that is in you." Dante compares Nature to an artist, *C'ha l'abito dell' arte, e man che trema*,[1] who has in his mind the true pattern of the Divine idea, but whose hand shakes in the delineation of the same: so that, *Ideale poi più e men traluce*,[2] the perfect type (which art tries to bring out), is never fully realized in Nature, but shines more or less imperfectly through the veil of matter. It is for fine art to seize and apprehend from these shadowings the ideal they derive from, and to bring it out into clearer light, as when one takes a deep and obscure author and interprets and illustrates him. So man's own task of self-evolution, moral and intellectual, is but a work of fine art, to which he is constrained by his Maker. It is the apprehending and bringing out, each in himself, of that ideal hinted at in his own character, circumstances, gifts, and opportunities—seeing what God expects of him and fulfilling that expectation. Indeed, all human co-operation with God's designs for society, for humanity at large, is art in the truest sense—the correction of Nature's trembling

[1] Resembling thus the artist in her work,
Whose faltering hand is faithless to his skill.
(Cary's Dante, *Paradiso*, xiii.)

[2] . . . More or less it shows
Th' ideal stamp imprest. . . .

lines to the true pattern which we perceive she is trying to imitate.

CCIV.

FEEDING THE HUNGRY.

Esurivi et dedistis mihi manducare.

"I was hungry and you gave Me to eat." God not only gives all living things their being, but "opens His hand and fills them with plenteousness," preserving that life as lovingly as He gave it. Do I reflect how from my first breath God has prepared and given me every morsel that has crossed my lips; putting milk, as Augustine notes,[1] in my mother's breast, giving her the desire to impart it, and me the power to draw it, ere I knew what food was, or that I needed food; caring for me thus tenderly, ere I knew Him or could know Him; and this, in order that I might live to know Him, and, knowing His love, to love Him. What then shall I say of the food He has prepared for my soul, "filling my mouth with good things so that my youth is renewed like the eagle's;" of the Living Bread, the flesh of the Incarnate, the Corn of God ground and crushed on Calvary? He, who feeds all, and has so fed even me, His thankless and perfidious creature, He it is who comes to me hungry and thirsty in the person of His *minimi*, His little ones, dependent on my compassion, desirous to be fed with the crumbs from my table, which is loaded with His own bounty. *Sitio*—"I thirst," He cries to me from His Cross; *Da mihi*

[1] *Conf.* i.

bibere—"Give Me to drink," from the well-side; *Ubi est triticum et vinum*—"Where is the wheat and the wine?" from the starving multitudes, the *parvuli in plateis*.[1] If they are to follow Him into the desert, there to be fed with the Word of Life, they must have, in due measure, the meat that perishes. We cannot hope to evangelize the multitudes until we feed them, still less if we show ourselves indifferent to their temporal needs and welfare. It *may* be, but it can hardly be, that he who is callous to the miseries of the body and of the natural affections, is full of pity for supernatural ills. "If a man love not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not?" If he is insensible to the natural and visible, how shall he be sensitive to the invisible and eternal?

"Come ye blessed," He will say to those who fed Him, "come and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God." The Eucharist on earth is after all but the foreshadowing of that Eternal Banquet which celebrates the marriage-supper of the Lamb. And if to those who fed Him not, He will say, *Ite maledicti*—"Go, ye accursed," what will be their doom who have robbed the poor of their wages, or sweated them and ground them down to a starvation wage? Or still more, what of those heresiarchs and others who have robbed them of the Bread of eternal life, of the Word of God and of the sacraments? Nor is the crime confined to the persecutors of religion, but is intensified in its ministers, who through

[1] Thren.

negligence, culpable ignorance, avarice, sloth, have starved the flocks committed to their care.

CCV.

CLOTHING THE NAKED.

Nudus fui et operuistis me.

"I was naked and you clothed Me." It were no despicable matter for gratitude that God has clothed housed, and warmed me all my life through; still it is our convention that He is not to be thanked for such benefits as air and light, which, being shared by all, are no mark of special regard; or which, being showered upon us continuously, mark no point where, more than at another, the debt of gratitude falls due.

That God should have clothed the spiritual nakedness of mere humanity with the garment of grace was a sufficient mystery of love; still more that in Baptism He should restore that white robe forfeited by ancestral sin; but most of all that, after we have rent and soiled and cast off this fair garment, He should restore it to us, not once, but again and again in holy Penance; that after our mad outbreaks He should bring us to sit at His feet "clothed and in our right mind;" that finding us by the wayside wounded and stripped of our garments, He should treat our fault as though it were our misfortune, and should draw nigh to us in compassion; that He should replace the befouled rags and tatters of the returning prodigal with the best robe, the ring and the sandals, the insignia of sonship.

I was naked and He clothed me. His garments

were torn from Him that my sins and spiritual wounds might be covered and healed. In Christ, as He hangs naked on His Cross, I see the nakedness of the members of His Mystic Body in whom He cries out to me, cold and shivering and shamefast. Do I cover and clothe Him in return, excusing and hiding the faults of others; or do I, by detraction, strip the garments from His bleeding back and shame Him before others; or still worse, by calumny or calumnious exaggeration do I, with my own hand inflict such wounds or aggravate them?

Venite benedicti—"Come ye Blessed," He will say to those who have clothed Him. He will "cover the multitude of their sins" "in the sight of His holy angels," and will "clothe them with the stole of glory;" and they shall not be ashamed of the record of sins that are long blotted out by works of mercy, or of wounds that gleam like rubies, bright witnesses of the mercy pledged to the merciful.

CCVI.

HARBOURING STRANGERS.

Hospes eram et collegistis me.

"I was a stranger and you brought Me in." We were strangers to God by nature, yet by grace He called us to adoptive sonship, to the household of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. We were strangers and worse, by our racial fall, and yet again He did not wait till we knocked, but came forth to seek us in the desert and to "open

the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers;" to pour out on us the Spirit which works within our every good wish, which emboldens us to knock and to seek and to cry out: Abba, Father! And if the Jews were, by vocation, the due recipients of the Gospel Church, it was to us Gentiles, strangers and aliens from Israel, that it was absolutely decreed. We were strangers, yet He brought us within that great enclosure and home of mercy. And He has sought me, who by so many sins have so often estranged myself, and brought me in again and again, wishing that I should be at home with Him, one of His household, His familiars, not a servant, but a friend and confidant, "for the servant knoweth not what his master doth." *Quid retribuam?* What return shall I make when He comes to me as a stranger in all those from whom I am separated or alienated in any way whatsoever; by difference of temperament, character, tastes, sympathies, opinions, beliefs, education, birth, and so forth; who are likely to feel strange with me or ill at ease, and wish to be back in their old surroundings. Do I emphasize differences, or do I merge them? am I sympathetic or antipathetic? am I affable in the old scholastic sense, *i.e.*, one who can be spoken to easily, who is approachable, unstarched; a man to whom (as Newman says somewhere) you could speak in your shirt-sleeves; or am I stiff, patronizing, vulgar? There is no harder cross than loneliness and isolation, the sense of being out in the cold, not wanted, perhaps to some extent "boycotted;" and there is no greater charity than that which lightens it.

Venite benedicti. "Strangers and pilgrims on earth," though they be, those who harbour the stranger, shall before all others feel at home in Heaven. Mary will be ready with her motherly welcome, nor will they feel shy or strange when she leads them by the hand to show to them the blessed fruit of her womb, Jesus—no stranger to them. *Ite maledicti.* They who have shut the door in the face of the stranger shall be driven into eternal banishment; to wander, like Cain, as vagabonds, through the dark night of chaos, in that "outer darkness" made deeper by the glimpses of the interior light; colder, by contrast with the household glow which they have forfeited for ever. "Depart from Me, I never knew you," that is: "you are strangers to Me, and strangers you shall be for ever."

CCVII.

VISITING THE SICK.

Infirmus fui et visitastis me.

"I was sick and you visited Me." Every hour of good health that we have ever enjoyed was of God's kindness and preservation. He is our chief physician and healer. If ever we have recovered from illness, it was He who gave the physician his skill, and the drugs their virtue, and who ordered all these means to our recovery and, in our bodily nature, worked with them to bring about our cure. If others felt for us and sympathized with us, it was He, who felt for us more, who filled them with the milk of human kindness—He, who has made human

hearts the instruments and conveyers of His own loving compassion. "He who made the eye, shall He not see?" He who formed men for pity, shall He not pity? Pity for bodily ills is not the highest component of charity, but it is essential and in a way, the first, the most fundamental in order of genesis. Christ came to redeem the whole man, soul and body; soul principally, yet body first; in order to the soul. *Circuibat benefaciendo*—"He went about doing good," refers primarily to His works of bodily healing. And in His Church He observes a like economy, "knowing whereof we are made, remembering that we are but dust;" insisting before all else on the corporal works of mercy; on the anointing of His mystical body with the spikenard destined otherwise for selfish luxury. Are we then grateful to God for our bodily health and vigour, or has it made us hard and unsympathetic for the weakly; slow to believe in their sufferings; quick to condemn them as pusillanimous, hypochondriacal? Or if we have had the grace of sickness and infirmity, has it taught us and mellowed us, as it ought; or has it simply been received as a grievance to be shaken off as soon as possible?

Moreover, and far more, is God the physician of souls "who forgiveth all thy sin, who healeth all thy diseases," "by whose stripes we were healed;" who drew near in pity and bound up our wounds, pouring in the wine of His Passion-blood, the oil of blood-bought grace. Think, too, how He has nursed us through our sickness of soul, our noisome

diseases; with what patient watchings night and day through our hours of unconsciousness or delirium when we knew Him not, or mistook Him, or hated and resisted Him. And even when it was not His will to heal us of our bodily or spiritual ills, at least He visited us and consoled us with the assurance that He afflicted us, not willingly, but lothely, as a father who chastises the son of his love.

I was sick and He visited me. *Quid retribuam?* He comes to me sick and infirm in the person of those who are ailing in body; or who are labouring under spiritual weaknesses and vices. He does not ask me to heal Him; for that is not always in my power; but simply to visit Him; to part the burden of His sufferings by compassion; to dispel the sense of weariness and loneliness—often more oppressive than pain itself. Still more does He crave my ministry and consolation in His spiritual ailments, in His ignorance of things human and divine, His weakness, waywardness, viciousness. He who has borne with my stupidity, and forced His light through my wilfully closed eyelids, and sought me out when I fled from Him, and kissed my ulcerous sores into health. And am I to be unfeeling, fastidious, impatient, austere, rigorous, with my fellow-servant? Even if we may not extend to the wilfully vicious the sympathy of approbation, we should at least feel the sympathy of comprehension, of a knowledge of the human heart and its pathology, which should forbid us to wonder or be astonished at any depth to which man can sink, as though we ourselves were not borne up, in spite of ourselves,

by the invisible arms of demerited mercy. Much more do sins of frailty claim our tender forbearance, under penalty of being subjected to the like ourselves.

Venite benedicti—"Come, ye Blessed." *Dic animæ meæ; salus tua sum ego.* He will say to my soul, "I am thy health." *Sana me Domine et sanabor, salvum me fac et salvus ero*—"Do thou heal me, Lord, and I shall indeed be healed." Then only shall soul and body enter into a state of perfect and unbroken, unbreakable health through close union with Him who is the fountain of their being, preservation, growth, and health.

CCVIII.

VISITING PRISONERS.

In carcere eram et venistis ad me.

"I was in prison and you came unto Me." Here first He deals with an affliction which is due to the sufferer's own fault. Also, as in the case of the sick, with one which it is not always in our power to remove or cure, but at most to alleviate by practical pity.

We were in prison, in the bondage of Egypt, and He came to us, the true Moses, and led us out with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; and through the blood of the Passover brought us into freedom and sonship. He came to us, He tabernacled with us, He was not ashamed to share our nature, *non horruisti virginis utero;* nay, He did not shrink from the likeness of *sinful* flesh, laying aside

the bodily glory and immortality which was the connatural birthright of the Incarnate, and mingling with sinners as one of themselves; tempted in all points as we; chastised, though personally sinless, beyond all others. Have we not as children, and at all times, felt a loyal love towards those who came to us and stood by us when we were in disgrace; who went bail for us? And now it is God that comes to us and takes us up, when the mother that bore us has abandoned us, despaired of us, forgotten us. *Pater meus et mater mea dereliquerunt me, Dominus autem assumpsit me.* What love was hers whom He championed against the self-righteous world; shaming her accusers out of His presence till she was left with Him alone to hear: "Neither will I condemn thee; go, sin no more;" thus making Himself a partaker in her disgrace, and heedless of His own repute! So, in general, has He everywhere cast in His lot with those whom the world despises, the poor, the weak, the ignorant, the sinful. He has come to us in this prison-house of a world; into the prison of Mary's womb; into the prison of flesh and blood; into the prison of the grave and of Hell; into the prison of the sacred species and of the tabernacle of the altar.

Quid retribuam? What return shall I make when I find Him in prison, in disgrace, forsaken, outcast, exiled, when I meet Him in the person of those who are under a cloud through their own fault?

"Come to Me," He says, "all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you;" and

relying on these words we often try to come and cannot; we seek and find not; we knock and the door remains closed. And why? Because we do not come to Him where He is to be found. Where, then, is He to be found? "Lo!" He says, "I am with you all days, even to the end of the world." He is with us in His Vicar to teach us; in the sacraments, to heal and strengthen us; in the Eucharist, to be worshipped and adored by us; in His brethren, to be pitied and loved and served by us. *Pauperes semper habetis vobiscum;* the poor ye have always with you. There He is to be found—in our midst, and we know Him not. "Have you not known, have you not heard, hath it not been told you from the beginning?" Have we not known and heard that "new commandment," which was from the beginning,—new, because like truth or God, it ages not: the commandment "that you love one another as I have loved you." It is in the prisoners that we are to find Him and to come to Him; in the sick, and the naked, and the stranger, and the hungry, and the thirsty. Else, in that day, when we shall so want to come to Him, He will not say to us: "Come;" but: "Go," for "I was in prison and you *came not unto Me;*" "I know you not," for "I was a stranger and you brought Me not in." "Go now in outer darkness. Go into everlasting hunger and thirst and cold and nakedness; for I was hungry, thirsty, cold and naked, and you had no pity for Me."

CCIX.

FROM GOD'S FEET TO HIS FACE.

Ostende faciem tuam et salvi erimus.

"Show us Thy face and we shall be safe." Here we see but His footprints; His feet; the members of the mystic Christ, but not the head. The members we have always with us, and can do good to them when we will. Let us so serve His feet that we shall one day see His face. Mary rose from the anointing of His feet to the anointing of His head. While we see but His feet we are not yet safe. We may turn away in disgust; for they are soiled, cut, and bleeding. But when once we see His face we are safe for ever: *Ostende faciem tuam et salvi erimus*. This is life eternal, when the veiling clouds of created heaven and earth shall be rolled away from before the face of the sun. *Signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui Domine, dedisti lætitiam in corde meo*—"The light of Thy face is sealed upon us; Thou hast gladdened My heart."

CCX.

SHEEP OUTSIDE THE FOLD.

Nolite timere; scio enim quod Jesum quæritis.

"Fear not; for I know you seek Jesus." May we not say this of all those outside the Church who are in good faith, who seek Him where He is not to be found, in graves and the abodes of death, instead of among the living; who know but

a dead Christ, a past Christ, a human Christ, and yet love what they know and as far as they know; and hasten in the early morning to do honour to His sacred ashes? If their little light kindles so much love, can we doubt but that sooner or later He will manifest Himself to them in His risen glory, were it even at their last breath? All genuine goodness is not only *ex Deo*, but also *in Deum;* it derives from Truth and leads to Truth. For such let us have no fear. *Nolite timere: Jesum quæritis.*

CCXI.

GIFTS THAT COST.

Pie Pelicane Jesu Domine.

God often likens His Divine affection for our weakness and feebleness to that of the mother bird, who gathers her brood under her wing for warmth and protection. Yet since Nature's best symbols are defective, legend tries to give us a better one in the pelican, which not merely feeds its nestlings with its life-blood; but draws that stream from self-inflicted wounds. Many will give; but few will suffer in order to give. "Greater love hath no man than this," that he should pour out his blood for his friend; and yet it is but a miserable echo of the passionate cry of the Divine Lover, which forced the Blood from His veins. *Calix meus inebrians, quam præclarus est!*

CCXII.

GOD'S LOVE NOT BLIND.

Dico tibi Petre quia in hac nocte ter me negabis.

"I tell thee, Peter, that this very night thou shalt deny Me thrice." If God should for an instant raise the veil of the future and show us one whom now we love and venerate and toil for and all but idolize, fallen, degraded, hateful, and estranged from us for ever, we should understand better the tenderness of the Divine love which is so often shadowed and saddened, but never chilled by the clouds beyond our horizon. He loves us and labours for us no less although He knows that His love and labour will be in vain, although He sees "within the green, the moulder'd tree." *Tantus labor non sit cassus.*

CCXIII.

VANITY AND PRIDE.

Quid habes quod non accepisti?

"What hast thou that thou hast not received; and if thou hast received, why boast as if thou hadst not?" The malice lies, not in glorying in God's gifts; but in forgetting that they are gifts. St. Paul glories in his graces and labours and successes; but he says: *Non ego sed gratia Dei mecum*—"Not I, but Christ in me." The "thorn in the flesh" was left with him as a continual reminder of the products of his originality. That was his own entirely. Mary says: *Fecit mihi magna*—"He has

done great things for me." She knew and confessed herself Blessed among women; she knew the measure of her greatness far better than we know it. Yet gratitude and humility are the only emotions stirred by this knowledge. How much pleasanter and more humble is the frankness of vanity than the prudery of self-depreciation. It is no harm to think that God has given us more than He has done, just as it is no harm for a beggar to be enraptured with the magnificence of some shabby garment he has received; for he has perhaps never seen anything better. But however little we think our talents, it is great harm to credit ourselves with the origination of them. Indeed, it is the implicit supposition that we are answerable for them that makes pseudo-modesty shy of claiming too much. A man ought to speak as simply of his mental and moral gifts as of his stature or complexion or weight. Even were they the greatest on earth, their greatness is but relative to something very small.

CCXIV.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Veni, Sancte Spiritus.

"Come, Holy Ghost." It is the taming effect of passionate love which makes God Himself *mansuetus*, meek and ready at our beck and call. We can say to Him, "Go," and He goeth; "Come," and He cometh; "Do this," and He doeth it. "Behold, I am in your midst as one who serveth," He confesses. The priest's power over Him is simply

dominative; often tyrannical. Yet *all* can bind Him, banish Him, determine His movements largely. *Ecce Rex tuus venit tibi mansuetus*—"Lo, thy King comes to thee submissive"—*Come augel al richiamo*, like a hawk to the whistle, free by nature and made to soar; but drawn to earth by an invisible chain.

(1) "Holy Spirit," *i.e.*, the sigh of satisfied love with which the Father looks upon His image in the face of the Eternal Son: "He shall see of the travail of His Soul and shall be satisfied." "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." And as mirror answers mirror, so that love and satisfaction and sigh returns upon itself from the Son to the Father and back to the Son, intertwining with itself and weaving a new personality—the Spirit of Love.

(2) Spirit, *i.e.*, the quickening principle—*Dominum et vivificantem*—bringing life from death. *Emitte Spiritum tuum et creabuntur, et renovabis faciem terræ*—"Thou shalt send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created, and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth," turning winter into spring. "The words that I speak they are spirit and they are life." "The spirit quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." "What is born of the flesh is flesh; what is born of the spirit is spirit." The flesh is corrupt nature giving birth to works of corruption, whose wages is death. The Spirit is the Paraclete dwelling in our heart and will, making us both receive and love the "words which I speak unto you," and giving birth to the works of grace, whose reward is Eternal Life—a greater Gift in the same order; as we read:

"If thou knewest the Gift of God," namely, the Living Water or the Holy Ghost, or Eternal Life, or the Spirit which quickens our profitless flesh.

(3) Spirit, *i.e.*, the formal principle; turning chaos into cosmos. The principle of all beauty, which is nothing else than a throwing off of the bonds and restrictions of what is gross and material, and a putting on of that which is heavenly, divine, spiritual. *Lava quod est sordidum, riga quod est aridum, fove quod est frigidum, flecte quod est rigidum.* Sordid, dry, cold, rigid, are all attributes of gross matter, opposite diametrically to the characteristics of spiritual beauty, and of that Spirit who is subsistent Beauty.

CCXV.

FATHER OF THE POOR.

Veni Pater pauperum.

"Father of the poor." We consider ourselves absolved from further obligations if we relieve the distressed; but feel no way bound to enter into personal relationship with them or to create a permanent tie. We give our money, but not ourselves. This is not enough. *Non quæro donum tuum sed te,* God says to us in the person of His poor—I seek, not your gift, but your self. "I was *a father* to the orphan," says Job. It is no true charity which does not spring from an inward friendship of some sort. In becoming "our Father" God shows us what charity means: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us

that we should be and be called *sons* of God." He gave us Himself; and became ours—*our* Father.

CCXVI.

LIGHT OF HEARTS.

Veni lumen cordium.

(1) "Light of the heart." There is a heart-light and a head-light, the former instinctive, leaping to the truth by sympathy with the truth; *Qui facit veritatem venit ad lumen;* the latter a thin line of light which, followed laboriously and perseveringly, leads us out of the labyrinth of error.

(2) "Light of the heart." There is a darkness and gloom of the affections no less than of the intellect. Every lower affection stands out like a dark cloud in contrast with those that are higher. One alone—the love of God—is absolutely light under all circumstances, and from it the rest borrow their tints.

CCXVII.

THE BEST COMFORTER.

Consolator optime.

"Best of all Consolers." Not the only one, but the best of all. God is the *Deus totius consolationis*—the God of all consolation; and it is He who moves others to compassionate us, making them the instruments of His own pity and love. If we could but hear His voice in theirs, their words would be to us as a Divine message. Apart from Him what do they avail? *Quando Jesus intus non loquitur,*

consolatio vilis est; si autem Jesus unum tantum verbum loquitur magna consolatio sentitur—"When Jesus speaks not within us, all comfort is worthless; but if Jesus speaks, were it only one word, great is our consolation." How dead, formal, commonplace everything sounds unless we can feel that it is heaven-sent, from the Mover of all hearts! And if we would be good consolers our pattern is this *Consolator optime* with His quiet, peaceful, tactful ways: who fits Himself into our thought and mood as water enters into the pores of a sponge; not contradicting, rebuking, or minimizing a grief which, small in itself, is great to our littleness and weakness. He first makes Himself one with us, and then insensibly makes us one with Himself. *Optime* not only because love and pity is best in its source, but because He alone knows every cranny and winding, every little nerve-fibre and capillary of our soul. Consolation addresses the affections principally; the mind secondarily. For it is the mere offering of sympathy and love which salves the wound of sorrow, always and necessarily. If words can also guide the suffering mind skilfully away from its theme of bitterness, if they can correct the magnifying illusions of passion; if they can quicken hope for the future, gratitude for the past and for much that is left in the present, such words are golden. But there was much wisdom and taste in the unwisest of consolers when they "sat with Job on the earth seven days and seven nights, and no one spake to him a word; for they saw that his grief was exceeding great."

CCXVIII.

OUR GUEST.

Dulcis hospes animæ.

"Sweet Guest of the soul." A guest is one whom we entertain to the best of our ability, and treat punctiliously with all due ceremony and politeness. One, moreover, who is not born in the house, and from whom we are alien by blood; who is not tied to the house, but comes if allowed or invited; and goes, when he finds he is no longer welcome. God's Holy Spirit is a stranger; and yet in will and love He is ours by ties closer than blood. He comes knocking and begging for entertainment. "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man open I will come in and sup with him," "Make ready; for I must eat the pasch at thy house." He does not stand on ceremony, or exact unreasonable attendance, or give unnecessary trouble; and He is slow to take offence, bearing with rudeness almost to the verge of insult; for His nobleness allows for our rusticity and vulgarity. Surely He is a *dulcis hospes* even to the least loving entertainers, *dulcis, suavis, et mitis;* much more when He sees our poor efforts to make Him feel at home in our filthy houses; or when, at least, we apologize with a *Domine, non sum dignus*: Lord, I am not fit to receive Thee in my house.

CCXIX.

FEARFULNESS.

Timui te quia homo austerus es

"I feared thee, for that thou wert an austere man." Many "safe" people may be damned for their mean conceptions of Almighty God. "Thou wicked servant;" He will say to them. Fear is a contracting influence. What is done out of fear is done *propter aliud*, as a means to an end, and is therefore strictly measured to the end. What is done out of love is done *propter se*, for its own sake, and therefore the more liberally the better. Love is an expansive influence. Excessive fear for one's own safety blinds one's eyes to a real danger, and so defeats itself. "Boldness is prudence" very often; and he who watches the clouds will never reap. "Out of thy own mouth will I condemn thee," *i.e.*, on thine own principles. For even fear should make us tremble to keep our talent rusting in the earth, when the command is: "Trade!" Those who abstain from doing good for fear of doing harm; for fear of vanity, of inordinate affection, of dissipation, of the thousand certain venial sins, and risks of mortal sins inseparable from the service of others; such "prudent" souls may expect a like commendation, *Serve nequam!*—"Thou wicked servant." One is safer fighting for God in the thick of the fire, than skulking in the background for fear of wasting powder.

"And let them advance," says St. Ignatius

Loyola, "in a spirit of love; not with the agitation of fear." Conscientiousness is not timidity. One who knows his heart is right with God, who can say honestly, *Tu scis quia amo te,* has no tormenting fear; but goes on straight. When we mistrust the sincerity of our love, we begin to analyze and test our every act. A skilful cyclist never thinks of falling, a beginner thinks of nothing else. The former is a figure of true conscientiousness, which is never self-conscious. "Lord, *when* saw we Thee hungry and fed Thee?" It never needs to purify its intention; hardly knows what an intention is. *Talium est regnum cœlorum.* Of such child-like, direct, simple lovers is the Kingdom of Heaven.

CCXX.

GOD IN EVERY SOLACE.

Qui consolatur humiles, consolatus est nos Deus in adventu Titi.

"God who comforts the lowly, comforted us in the arrival of Titus." Notice how St. Paul regards all human consolers as instruments of the "God of all consolation." He it is who "prepares the heart," and draws men to love one another, and loves us in their love, and loves them in ours. Of the two it is more important to see God as the All-mover, than as the All-maker and Sustainer, for thus we realize how continually active He is in our regard. Most of all do we live in His presence if we feel Him as Mover of hearts, of our own and others'. *Omnes in eo, et eum in omnibus amando,* says Ignatius. How hard when misunderstood! how easy when understood.

CCXXI.

VARIOUS TONGUES.

Loquebantur Apostoli variis linguis magnalia Dei.

"The Apostles spoke with many tongues the great things of God." Their theme was, the *magnalia Dei,* the great things and mysteries of God's love, everything that could enslave men's hearts to the unknown and much misrepresented God. *Variis linguis prout Spiritus dabat eis eloqui*— "With various tongues, as the Spirit gave them

utterance." This is the apostolic vocation, to be able to speak to each heart in its own language, "all things to all." This is a discernment which God's Spirit gives—the true and only eloquence. Many-sided and many-tongued, and yet single-hearted and sincere. What is the tongue of fire but the language of love, love of God and of men; a strong desire to make men see God aright and be happy in that sight? Where there is a will there is a way. This love, like a subtle flame, will find its way to the heart through some crack or crevice; it will hit on the right word, the happy mood or manner; it will even be patient and discreet, and will hold back for greater eventual advantage, but it will never rest. "Parthians, Medes, Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt, the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, Jews, Proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians." What a medley of tongues! and yet what is it compared with the number of heart-languages we must know if we would make known the *magnalia Dei* to all sorts and conditions of men.

CCXXII.

WISDOM AND UTTERANCE.

Dabo vobis os et sapientiam, cui non poterunt resistere adversarii vestri.

"I will give you utterance and wisdom which your enemies cannot resist." Both are gifts and fruits of the Gift, *Os* no less than *Sapientia*. Neither is any use for the Apostle without the other. *Os*, or expression, is not the bare statement of truth,

nor is wisdom the bare apprehension of dogmas. Wisdom is a comprehensive, loving intelligence of God and man. Expression is the happy and beautiful utterance of the truth, and of our love of it. The study of expression, rightly understood, is as imperative on the Apostle as the study of wisdom. If both are studied in the orator's or advocate's spirit, the result is "pulpit oratory," "sacred eloquence." If studied with a single view to the end, the result is unstudied. A little love does more than years of study, if only there be some mother-wit to steer it. It lights up the mind and loosens the tongue. Most men are clever and eloquent about what they love, if it were only a sport or a vice.

CCXXIII.

ART AND HOLINESS.

Quorum si specie delectati deos putaverunt, sciant quanto his Dominator eorum speciosior est.

"If delighted by their beauty they hold these things as Divine, let them know that their Ruler is still more beautiful; for it is the Author of all beauty who has made these things." Justice, according to Aristotle, if it be produced to infinity or to perfection, must involve fortitude and temperance; and fortitude in its perfection is justice and temperance; and so of all virtues, which are but facets of one virtue or *honestas*. In like manner, the love of God's beauty, when pure and perfect, means the love of His holiness; and the ardent love of His holiness, entrains the love of His beauty.

From all quarters souls are drawn to this Centre, which is Beauty and Holiness indistinctly, and as they approach nearer, they become more like one another. The prophets, especially David and Isaias, discern beauty in holiness; the poets, holiness in beauty. Their paths differ, their end is one. The philosopher sees holiness and beauty in truth.

Still the love of what is æsthetically beautiful does not necessarily lead to the love of God, unless God be explicitly recognized as its source. This explicit recognition is a philosophic conception to which artistic souls of even the highest order may be blind. Also, God is many-sided, and to recognize Him only as the Archetype and First Lover of the æsthetically beautiful, makes Him lovable under that aspect alone. If the eye has never been opened to moral beauty in creatures, if the taste for the noble and pure in human conduct has never been formed or developed, the soul will be blind to that aspect of the Divine loveliness which leads to holiness of life. Hence we find the love of æsthetic beauty compatible with the absence of all personal love of God, or of personal love of the Divine holiness. And also we find a love of moral beauty compatible (as in pagans), with an absence of all personal love of God, or of personal love of the Divine beauty. But they are not few whose eye has been opened wide to the beautiful in every realm, and to the one source from which it flows in diverging streams, and to which those streams converge and return.

In some sense *Deo gratias* ought to rise more readily to our lips, in the presence of the beauty of

art, than before that of nature. This, no doubt, to some extent, because good art interprets nature, and points out her lovableness, and leads the way in praise. But also, and chiefly, perhaps, because the soul perceiving and loving nature's beauty, is a far more beautiful work of God, than any which we find in physical nature. Nature's jewels receive a thousand-fold brilliancy from this spiritual setting in the mind and heart of man; a faint reflex of the radiancy which belongs to their archetypes, as they lie embedded in the Eternal Thought and Love of God. As seen through the medium of the Divine Essence they are divinized; so, seen through that of created intelligence, they are spiritualized.

CCXXIV.

BENDING AND BREAKING.

Flecte quod est rigidum.

"Bend the rigid." The transition from the right line to any curve is by infinitesimal gradations which elude the subtlest mind and can only be expressed in approximations. So God's workings upon the heart and will. The change is there, but how it comes about we cannot tell. We can only say, "This I know, whereas I was blind, now I see." In our dealings with others, we might well emulate this gentle and insensible method of working, bending and not breaking. Our precipitation and abruptness often mars a good work.

CCXXV.

GOD OF MY HEART.

Defecit caro mea et cor meum. Deus, Deus cordis mei, et pars mea in æternum.

"My heart and my flesh faileth. God, is the God of my heart and my portion for ever." The flesh, that is, the weakness of our sensitive nature, often shrinks and fails while the heart is yet sound and unmoved. *Spiritus quidem promptus caro autem infirma*—"The spirit is willing, but the flesh weak;" but at times the heart too fails and grows cold and apathetic, and we have to fall back on the merely spiritual will, unassisted by the sympathy of the emotions. *Cœpit tædere et mœstus esse*—"He began to be weary and sad." It is hard to do what we have no heart in, for heart is courage (*cœur*). As our nature is constituted, will, without enthusiasm, can scarcely keep us up to the mark, much less carry us beyond it. *Deus, Deus cordis mei.* He is God of my love—what the sun is to the flower it unseals and expands, and draws after it. Love is courage, *nihil fortius amore*—nothing stronger. Again, it is God alone who can change and mould my heart when it has steeled itself against all other impressions, and grown callous to the stimulus of faith and reason. *Cor regis in manu Dei*—"The king's heart is in God's hand." Again, relying on His power and promise I can take heart and courage; *Viriliter age, confortetur cor tuum et sustine Dominum.*

Et pars mea in æternum—"And my portion for

ever." As the Levite was portionless among the children of Israel, so the priest of Christ finds spouse and child, father and mother, and all else in the Mystical Bride. In its purity, there is no human love so fair, so deep, so high, as that which the priest bears towards the sheep and the lambs. It is that *affectus Divinus* of the Good Shepherd Himself, blent with a crushing sense of the awful contrast between the office and the office-bearer. As the type is high and difficult, so the impression is mostly blurred and blotched, and perhaps only here and there a Curé d'Ars finds every affection of his heart drawn out and strained to the full, but all may feel at odd moments that which ought to be habitual. If one realized what a priest should be, no one would ever get ordained. God has to be content with such rubbish as He gets.

CCXXVI.

DAVID'S CRY.

Ego dixi, Domine; miserere mei; sana animam meam, quia peccavi tibi.

"I said, Lord, spare me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee." *Ego dixi.* There are in every life such epoch-marking *sayings*, internal *éclaircissements;* flashes that break out into words and *fiats*, like the creative *fiats* of God. They are but the *locutiones Dei;* the whisperings of the Holy Spirit echoed by the heart, and flung out in the speech they fashion for themselves. *Ego dixi, nunc cœpi. Ego dixi, omnis homo mendax. Ego dixi, custodiam vias meas*—"I

must begin at once;" "I must not rely upon men;" "I must be on my guard." All these are David's "lights." And now he cries: *Domine, miserere mei*— "Lord, spare me." A sudden light as to his deep sinfulness; his need, not merely of pity (who does not need that?) but of forgiveness; a sense of an uplifted rod, and a shrinking from the all-consuming anger of God. *Peccavi nimis; mea maxima culpa;* a sense of friendship broken; of love treacherously wounded: of a separation worse than death. *Deus propitius esto mihi peccatori. Sana animam meam.* To have sinned against God, is to have rent the soul like a plant from its root in God's Heart; to have left it torn, and bleeding to death. As far as lies in me, I have also rent the root and left that Heart wherein I grew, lacerated and bleeding from a freshly-opened wound. Yet it is thither I must turn, as to my physician for cure and comfort, to be taken up and re-engrafted and bound closely to it, till every trace of the rupture is obliterated. *Sana me, Domine, et sanabor!* So, "wounded and half dead," I cry to the Good Samaritan, as He passes by the way; and He comes, compassionate, to bind me up, pouring in oil and wine. *Sana me, Domine.* So I cry from the very tomb and from the stench of my corruption; and He comes and stands over the ruins of His loved one, and weeps and cries, *Veni foras! Solvite et dimittite. Quia peccavi tibi. Tibi!* what a plea for pity! We should not go to those whom we have injured for help. But rather we should say: Heal me, for at least I have done *you* no harm. Does it not mean rather: To none other would I dare turn for pardon after such

offence; but it is against Thee, the all-pardoning, I have sinned. Or is it that sin is our especial title to His mercy, who is the friend of publicans and sinners; sent to the sick, not to the whole; to the lost sheep of Israel? Or does it mean that this is the gravest of wounds, the bitterest death, the most pitiable of all miseries, the one misery, to have sinned against *Thee*, the all-loving life of our soul, to have been torn from that root: and so God's pity must forget His wrong in the sight of our extreme wretchedness?

CCXXVII.

CARNAL AFFECTIONS.

Omnem carnalem affectum erga sanguine junctos exuant eumque in spiritualem convertant.

"Let them put off all carnal affection towards their kindred," says Loyola, "and convert it into spiritual." The purification, as opposed to the eradication of our natural affections, is here prescribed. It is a "conversion" which means the passage of the same matter from one form to another; the mode of love, and not the affection itself, is to be altered. What was defective, the element of weakness, selfishness, and corruption, is to be purged out; and it is to be changed into the noblest and deepest and divinest form of natural love such as fits the Christian; a love that will suffer separation, that will not shrink from paining the beloved; firm, enduring, spiritual, tender. Parental, filial, fraternal, conjugal love, present an infinite variety of types; from what is low and all but

animal, up to the love of Christ and Mary, and John and Lazarus, and Magdalene. In the *Recit d'un Sœur*, we have beautiful types of intense, yet wholly spiritualized natural affections; deep-hearted, tender, binding souls closer to one another, and thereby closer to God. No "natural" affection is carnal; if by "natural," we mean what befits the nobleness of humanity; and by "carnal" that which is selfish and evanescent.

CCXXVIII.

NEGLECTED CALLS.

Amice, ascende superius.

"Friend, move up higher." When God gives grace for a higher ascent in any virtue, in purity or charity or humility, He refuses us all help and co-operation for anything else. "This, or nothing," He seems to say. Some experience sudden lapses of strength where they were strong before. God wants them to come up higher. Their seat is taken away and put nearer to His. If they try to sit down where they are, they must take the consequences. Others lower down may hold their seats in security. Theirs is higher up or nowhere.

CCXXIX.

HUMAN FRAILTY.

Simon dormis? Sic non potuisti una hora vigilare mecum!

"Simon, are you asleep? And so you could not watch with Me even for an hour." A deeper, wider knowledge of our own weakness will make

us gentle towards ingratitude and save us from cynicism and bitterness. Is there any limit to our own thanklessness? Our Lord teaches us a lesson here, when His only rebuke to His Apostles is to excuse them: *Caro autem infirma*—"Flesh is weak." *Spiritus quidem promptus;* the will is sincere enough, but memory is feeble; impressions soon die away; absence obliterates as effectively as death; other cares and interests crowd the narrowness of our heart. The ingratitude of mere forgetfulness and inconsideration seems to me the most excusable thing in the world; and the meanness of those who are always looking for gratitude, and measuring their receipts with their expenditure, is much more reprehensible. "Give, expecting nothing in return," is the Divine counsel and the Divine practice; and blessed are they that expect nothing, for they shall not be disappointed.

CCXXX.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Panem de cœlo præstitisti eis.

"Thou gavest them bread from Heaven." Israel clamours for the comforts of captivity, the flesh-pots of Egypt, and God gives them beyond all they desire or deserve—manna from heaven; the food of angels, of God's free children. *Ecce panis angelorum, factus cibus viatorum; vere panis filiorum.* Our soul at times hankers for the seeming ease of past slavery; our imagination throws a halo round its seeming sweets, and blinds us to its bitterness

and degradation. Things visible seem alone to be real; things invisible, unreal, shadowy, intangible. *Anima nostra jam nauseat super cibo isto levissimo;* our soul revolts against this ethereal, supernatural diet. We crave for what is coarse, strong, pungent; "we remember the fish that we ate in Egypt free-cost; the cucumbers come to our mind, and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic." But against the delirium of materialism, reason and faith assure us that love is the life of the soul; and as the food is, such is the life. If God be the food and fuel of our love, then our every natural love is divinized and intensified. If we feed on the bread of angels, our whole appetite is healed and rectified; if on the husks of swine, our relish for everything higher is destroyed. He who has once tasted and discerned the distinctive flavour of this manna will recognize it as that which in some degree or other gives relish to every other food of the purified affections.

Omne delectamentum in se habentem—Containing in itself, as has been said, all the lovableness of every lovable creature, as the sun is warmer than aught which his rays warm. Yet not all taste that sweetness, and to some whose palate is disordered it tastes bitter. Its sacramental effect is to sweeten our whole tone and banish all sourness and cynicism, to kill every creeping "root of bitterness."

CCXXXI.

THE BREAD OF THE POOR.

Edent pauperes et saturabuntur.

(1) "The poor shall eat and shall be satisfied." God is no Dives to let Lazarus hunger for the crumbs of His table; but brings him to sit in wedding-garments at His right hand; serves him (*transiens ministrabit*) and gives him to the full of all that He has, giving Himself who is all—*saturabuntur;* they shall be satisfied. It is for the poor this Banquet is primarily prepared—*pauperes evangelisantur.* Their title is their poverty, misery, rags, diseases, sores. The rich are there on sufferance, and so long only as they recognize that their wealth is begged and borrowed. No room for the Pharisee, the self-righteous! Room for the publicans and harlots! *Esurientes implevit bonis, et divites dimisit inanes*—"He hath filled the hungry, and sent away the full."

(2) *Et laudabunt Dominum qui requirunt illum*—"And they shall praise the Lord who seek Him." Those who seek must find, and those who find must praise.

(3) *Vivent corda eorum in sæculum sæculi*—"Their hearts shall live for ever and ever." For he that eateth hath eternal life, the life of the heart, which is love, personal, intimate: the love of an unfailing friend, "one that sticketh closer than a brother." *Sine amico non potes bene vivere.* The heart that loves no one is dead: "a handful of dust."

CCXXXII.

ANGELS' FOOD.

Panem cœli dedit eis; panem angelorum manducavit homo.

"He gave them bread from heaven, and man did eat angels' food." Angels' food, *i.e.*, the food of the pure. *Neque nubent, neque nubentur, sed erunt sicut angeli Dei*—"They neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God." It is the food of the illuminated: for the pure shall see God, as clear water images the sun. *Angeli eorum semper vident faciem Patris.* The angels behold the face of God, not inferentially, but intuitively. Christ is the bread of angels, *i.e.*, on whom the angels feed their love; who sates their longing for truth, Himself their Truth and their Life. Again, He is the bread of angels, namely, the bread that makes us as angels, us, so carnal, dim-sighted, gross-minded, in every way unangelic. Here lies the mystery of Divine pity: *Ecce panis angelorum, factus cibus viatorum; vere panis filiorum non mittendus canibus*—"Lord, it is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs." Yet what does God care about proprieties and meetness when the souls of sinners are in question? He has no sense of dignity or stand-off self-respect, but runs forward, with all the weakness of passionate love, to meet us in our rags and filth, while we are yet a long way off; and weeps, and kisses us, and clothes and crowns us, and banquets us, and goes on like one beside himself for ecstasy and joy. "And in

the pursuit of his love the custom of mankind allows him [the lover] to do many strange things. . . . He may pray and entreat, and supplicate and swear, and be a servant of servants, and lie on a mat at the door."[1] All these "strange things" does the Divine Lover, yet one more strange than all:

O res mirabilis! manducat Dominum
Pauper servus et humilis!

"O marvel! that the poor and lowly slave should feed upon his Lord!" These last words are of one whom the bread of angels made angelic; singular for the virginal purity of his heart, for the clear depth of his calm, intellectual gaze; who seemed even on earth to "behold the face" of Truth, not climbing and crawling by laborious inference, but leaping by intuition from summit to summit, sure-footed as an antelope, *saliens super montes*—"leaping along the mountain crags," by the inspiration of Divine love—that best of enlighteners, which reveals the Father even to those children whose angels behold His face. They are true words from the same true heart that conceived the *Verbum supernum*, the *Pange lingua*, the *Adoro Te*, and the *Lauda Sion*.[2] It is the same Angel who has

[1] Plato, *Sym.*

[2] Sc., St. Thomas Aquinas, of whom one has said: "Unam canendi materiam sumpsit Doctor Angelicus; eamdemque divinitatis atque excellentiæ plenissimam, adeo angelicam, ab ipsis angelis celebratam ac adoratam. Est venerabilis sacramenti laudator Thomas summus, quem non sine numinis afflatu cecinisse credas; nec mireris, sanctum poetam postquam hoc unum carminis thema spiritale, et pene celeste tam præclare, nec dicam unice, absolverit, prorsus in posterum obticuisse. Peperit semel, sed leonem."

given us the Office and the Mass of the Blessed Eucharist; who is the Church's chosen exponent and guardian of the doctrine of this central mystery; to whom Christ Himself, unable to contain His love, broke out from the silent crucifix: "Well hast thou written of Me. What reward do you ask?" and he: "Thyself, Lord:

Ut te revelata cernens facie,
Visu sim beatus tuæ gloriæ."

CCXXXIII.

THE JOY OF OUR YOUTH.

Introibo ad altare Dei, ad Deum qui lætificat juventutem meam.

"I will go unto the altar of God, who rejoiceth my youth"; "who filleth thy mouth with good things so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's"; innocence and freshness is restored; and the leprous, sinful flesh comes fair and soft as the flesh of a little child.[1] All food to some extent revives us, repairs the ravages of time, and puts us back towards our younger self; not towards the youth of immaturity and weakness, but towards that of full freshness and vigour. The Bread of Life restores us not merely to the immature, negative innocence of Baptism, but to the lost strength of riper days and to greater; to that positive innocence and simplicity which is the last goal of our endeavour. "Ye must *become as* little children;" not by going back, but by going forward; not by "becoming little children," but "*as* little children,"

[1] 4 Kings v. 14.

who are lovable for what they are not, rather than what they are; for what they know not, than for what they know; for what they may be, and yet will not be; for the pathetic contrast between the promise and the fruit. It is merely as a symbol of the spiritual that childhood is put before us to imitate. As soon as reason wakes, negative simplicity gives place to positive *egoism;* directness to self-consciousness and complexity; and it is only the successful watchfulness and restraint of years that at last purifies and simplifies and induces that mature childhood so dear to God.

"God, who gives joy to my youth." The joy especially of hope, which is large in the young: untaught, unembittered by the disappointments and failures of life. Hope which rests on so negative a basis as ignorance cannot stand out many years. But the hope which characterizes the youth of mature grace is founded in knowledge and faith and intelligent confidence—the virtue most needed for those souls who see more deeply into the rottenness of human affairs, who feel more keenly the disappointments of life—which, after all, has been designed by God to raise great aspirations and disappoint them. It is a glorious virtue, not in narrow souls who can afford to be optimist because they see little and feel less, but in those who without faith would be cast in the lowest abyss of pessimistic despair; as, *e.g.*, Job, wildered with perplexity; condemned to distrust and unbelief by every current platitude and moral nostrum, and yet holding firm to the rock that seemed to totter and yield and sink

with him. "Though He should slay me," *i.e.*, though He should do even more than He has done to give the lie to my every preconceived idea of Him, "yet will I hope in Him." Or Dante, of whom Beatrice says:

> La chiesa militante alcun figliuolo
> Non ha con piu speranza.[1]

And yet in whom would despair have been more excusable? It was his insight into the Divine Name and Nature that saved him.

> Ma quei la distillò nel mio cor pria
> Che fu sommo cantor del sommo Duce.
> "Sperino in Te" nell' alta Teodia
> Dice "color che sanno 'l nome Tuo"
> E chi nol sa s'egli ha la fede mia?[2]

This is that joy of which it is written, "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy; and your joy no man taketh from you."

"God, who rejoices my youth." The sportiveness of youth is nature's effort to relax the pressure of superabundant vital energy, by "an alleviating discharge" or *catharsis*. *Amor currit et non fatigatur; vult esse sursum.* There are saints so full of the energy of Divine love that they do not know what to do with their strength; crosses are their play-

[1] Among her sons, not one more full of hope
Hath the Church Militant. (Dante, *Paradise*, xxv.)

[2] He first infused this hope into my heart
Who sang in highest strains the Highest's praise.
"Let all men hope in Thee," His anthem runs,
"That understand Thy Name," and who is he
That holds our creed yet does not understand? (*Ibid.*)

things; as they were His who with the Cross on His shoulder, "exulted as a giant to run His course;" rejoiced in the feat of strength as a relief for a surcharged Heart. A certain gaiety is the characteristic of childhood or kittenhood, the mere animal gaiety of inconsideration, of a fool's paradise. But the gaiety of one who sees and tastes the bitterness of life; which is founded on faith that stands above the storm and looks down on it, is no less than the gloss and finish of heroic hope. There is the laughter of Democritus, and the laughter of the angels; of contemptuous cynicism and of sympathetic, tolerant, Christian magnanimity. These childlike beauties are always decaying and aging — faith, lowliness, blind confidence, light-hearted hopefulness. They need renewing day by day. "Can a man when he is old enter into his mother's womb and be born again?" asks Nicodemus. Yet in the order of grace there is a "second spring" which sometimes supervenes upon a dead winter ere the year of life closes.

CCXXXIV.

WAITING IN SILENCE.

Bonum est præstolari cum silentio salutare Dei.

"It is good to wait for God's salvation in silence," and to keep calm while others shriek and lose their heads. It is great worship when one who sees deeply and widely into the causes of evil and sees no issue or hope, yet has unwavering faith and expectancy that God can call from putrefaction to

life. With the shallow optimist whose confidence springs from his ignorance of the true extent of evil and from a lazy love of smooth beliefs, it is good and wholesome to play the pessimist. For his hope is a bastard hope. There can be no true hope till there is danger of despair. But to him who is in danger of pessimism, not from cynical sympathy with it, but from weakness of faith, we must preach the true optimism: *Quare tristis es, anima mea? et quare conturbas me? Spera in Deo, quoniam adhuc confitebor illi: salutare vultus mei, et Deus meus.*

"In silence:" the silence not merely of the tongue, but of the reason and of the heart; that oriental tranquillity which should characterize an intelligent belief in Providence even more than a belief in fate and necessity. Scripture is full of this patience and quiet of hope. *Expecta Dominum; Expectans expectavi: Sustinuit anima mea in verbo ejus* "Wait on the Lord; rest in Him; trust Him"—the attitude of those who watch for the morning, knowing that it is surely coming, and that fretting will not hasten it.

CCXXXV.

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

Vota mea Domino reddam in conspectu omnis populi ejus; in atriis domus Domini, in medio tui Jerusalem.

"I will pay my vows to the Lord in the sight of all His people; in the courts of the house of the Lord, even in thy midst, O Jerusalem." According as we feel our own language, our mental imagery and expression, to be absolutely inadequate to

embody our due reverence and homage to the Host, so ought we love a High Mass or a Corpus Christi pageant, which is the Church's nobler (though feeble) utterance of that conception. We love the poet who shows us what we wanted to say, and who says it for us as we could never say it. Holy Church is here our poet. *Confiteantur tibi populi Deus, confiteantur tibi populi omnes*—"Let all peoples give thanks to Thee, O God." There is something satisfying and stirring in every public confession of God—a joy one misses largely in irreligious countries. One has felt it seeing the streets cleared and lined with kneeling crowds on either side, while a feeble old man passed along, bearing under a canopy a white wafer in a crystal case; or, as at Kreuzberg, when crowds of strong men gather round the Stations with outstretched arms and pray aloud to the poor Gallilean carpenter of two thousand years ago. It is in such moments one feels the heroism and glory of faith by which man rises above the apparent and visible, and lays hold of the real and unseen substance of things. It is essentially the victory of reason and spirit over sense and imagination.

CCXXXVI.

SELF-CONTEMPT.

Domine, non est exaltatum cor meum.

"Lord, my heart is not lifted up; I am not high-minded." As all pride is some form of smallness and narrowness, so humility is a part of magnanimity,

little as it appears in the picture of Aristotle's "magnanimous man." So far as humility means self-contempt, it is plain that only the narrowest view of the world, and a comparison of ourselves with the smallest of standards, could support an arrogant self-estimate in any department. So far as it means veneration and respect for others, it means a generous, broad-minded love of humanity, which is only possible to those who rise up to God's standpoint and enter into sympathy with His Divine affection. Else self-contempt were compatible with cynicism and bitterness, which is always narrow and feeble. The self-contempt of humility is not even bitter towards self, but patient and good-humoured, and never surprised at anything.

CCXXXVII.

CHRISTIAN OPTIMISM.

Nisi granum frumenti cadens in terram mortuum fuerit ipsum solum manet.

"Unless the grain die, it abides alone; if it die, it will bear fruit." There is a two-fold way of looking on life even from a Christian point of view. Either we may regard the disappointments, failures, vexations, and crosses, as incidental and secondary; as a bitter tonic which gives flavour to the sweets; as stimuli to greater exertion and progress; as the mere growing-pains of the world's happiness. Or else we may look on the world as in some sense designed to disappoint, by raising our aspirations to what it can never give. This is to make it simply an instru-

ment of man's moral development before all things. It cannot be doubted that sorrow and labour and the cross in every form draw out the deepest and noblest chords from the soul; or, that as a certain law of duality makes the knowledge of evil and deformity a necessary foil for our knowledge of goodness and beauty, so to have tasted sorrow seems a required predisposition for our appreciation of the contrary joy. "It behoved Christ to suffer, and thus to enter into His glory," may really be a psychological law for humanity in the natural order: it may be necessarily through many tribulations that we have to enter God's Kingdom. In this view, if aught succeeds or goes well for a time, it is but to give us breathing-space to gather strength for more endurance; or to give us a fore-glimpse of that eventual prevalence of truth and right for which we hope against hope. In a certain limited sense this view of life might be called pessimistic, in that it regards the bright spots as incidental and subordinate to the vast sombre expanse which forms the groundwork of life—mere oases in a desert. Still faith and hope line all this clouding with gold, so that optimism more truly describes the position; though it is not the optimism which flecks an Italian sky with a fleecy cloudlet here and there to throw out the depth of its blue.

CCXXXVIII.

TOLERANCE.

Sit potius universalis quidam amor qui partes omnes etsi inter se dissidentes in Domino amplectatur.

"Let there be rather a world-wide love which embraces in the Lord all parties, however discordant amongst themselves." This is Ignatian in the best sense. He does not require apathetic indifference, or an extinction of natural propensions, but the inclusion of all that is good in them in something higher and nobler; as contraries are said to meet in their common cause. He does not say: "embrace no cause," but "embrace all;"—not that one can embrace contrary parties *as parties;* but as a father may love both his children who are at enmity with one another. For there is a perverted truth in every error; and a distorted sense of justice at the bottom of every conflict.

CCXXXIX.

DIMENSIONS OF CHARITY.

Ut possitis comprehendere cum omnibus sanctis, quæ sit latitudo, et longitudo, et sublimitas, et profundum, et scire supereminentem caritatem Christi.

"That with all the saints you may be able to comprehend what is the breadth, and the length, and the height, and the depth, and to understand the surpassing charity of Christ." The comprehension of infinite dimensions is past the finite mind; nor is it possible to know by its causes, that which is

uncaused and is itself the cause of all. Yet it is in proportion to their progress in this endless study that saints have been sanctified and "filled with the fulness of God." For charity is gotten of charity, as flame from flame: *Diligimus eum quia prior dilexit nos.* It is primarily a matter of intellectual vision—a seeing God under a certain aspect.

"That you may be able to comprehend with all the saints." If we but touch the hem of His garment we shall be healed. Although even Mary herself cannot do more than lay hold of the fringes of God's garment of glory, yet the straining into the abysses above, below, around us, lifts us out of our littleness, and thus elevates and humbles us—for we are never so small as when we are proud; never so great as when we are humble. As man's progress in knowledge lies in fathoming his own ignorance; so his greatness consists in knowing a greatness which dwarfs him to nonentity in his own regard.

To know God's power or wisdom or beauty or justice may excite admiration, awe, a certain enthusiasm such as we may feel for an heroic soul to whom we are personally unknown; but it is *as loving us,* that He becomes the object of our love: *Dilexit me*—He loved me.

These dimensions of the Divine love are the proper object of all meditation and preaching. Every other theme is subordinate to this; dependent on this. It is no use to thunder forth anathema against those who do not love God, if we fail to point out to them, and teach them His lovableness. We may perhaps feel it ourselves, like many a massive

impression of which we can give no analysis. But for others, a certain power of exposition is wanted, even though an enthusiasm to some extent communicates itself irrationally.

"What is the breadth." A shallow love must of necessity be narrow; width is a sequel of depth. The wide-spreading branches of the cedar must rise from a root far down underground. Else width will mean weakness. God is that *Universalis amor qui partes omnes licet sibi invicem contrarias amplectitur.* —"Universal love which embraces all parts, however at discord among themselves;" *i.e.*, every particle of His creation, each in due proportion; not blinded to the lesser goodness by the glitter of the greater, as we are; nor overlooking twenty good points for the sake of one defect or blemish, as we do; contrariwise sparing Sodom for the sake of ten just men, suffering much cockle for the sake of a little wheat; much error for a latent grain of truth, for a little leaven hidden in the mass. Again, it is wide and universal, in the collective sense; viewing all together as parts of a whole; loving the universal and collective good as something diviner than the elements of which it consists; yet not abstractly, as we do, when we try to comprehend particulars in one whole; but concretely and with no diminution of particular interest. In some sense each single soul is the centre of the infinite sphere of God's love; all things radiate to it, and make a world for it, a world of creature-helps; as though God had no other thought or care.

If love is life—as it certainly is—how much life

does not the narrowness of our affections cut us off from! What abundant fuel of happiness is lying waste all about us while we shiver with cold? *Viam mandatorum tuorum cucurri cum dilatasti cor meum*—"I have run in the way of Thy commandments since Thou hast enlarged my heart." If God would come into our hearts He must needs break them or stretch them, as when new wine is poured into old bottles.

A narrow, trickling stream is turned aside and impeded by every little stone; but the wide, rushing flood sweeps over them or bears them away in its tumultuous energy. Our feeble love is stayed, repelled, distorted by every little trifling offence or defect, over which we trip and stumble and hurt ourselves. We are disunited, lonely, embittered, until our little streams lose themselves in the mighty torrent of God's all-forgiving, all-conquering, passionate love of humanity. Then are we gods and not men; "knowing good and evil"—knowing the great problem or riddle of creation; how seeming evil is solid good. *Ego dixi: Dii estis; quibus verbum Dei factum est.*

"What is the length." It is a love which endures for ever; and its endurance is but another outcome of its depth and strength. We are forgetful and changeable and therefore fickle; what suits our present humour and taste may, without defect on its own part, become indifferent or even odious to us. What God loves in us, He loves "with an everlasting love" from eternity to eternity. But more evidently does this endurance show itself in the form of long-

suffering patience, and constant service. He is so slow to give us up and turn away from us; so persistent in heaping grace upon grace; whereas we soon get "weary in well-doing;" disgusted by ingratitude; disheartened by futility. Our shallow affections are easily stirred; they spring up in a day and in the time of trial wither away. We think our love is imperishable; that separation would be unbearable; that we can never love another. Feeling and imagination obscure our judgment and hide the root and reason from our view; on which reasonable root endurance depends. But "who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" from Him "who sticketh closer than a brother;" who says, that though a mother should forget her babe He will never forget us; that no man shall pluck from His arms those whom the Father has given Him; that when we pass through the waterfloods He will be with us? "Neither life nor death . . . nor any other creature" is the persuasion of St. Paul.

There is nothing more beautiful in the romance of human love than constancy, long-tried and tempted and yet victorious over time; whether it be the constancy of friend, or spouse, or parent. All this beauty of endurance finds its archetype in God's love, and must lead us up to a better knowledge of it; for it is itself a participation of the divine.

"What is the height." There is a low love, and a higher love, and a sublime love, according to the nature of that good which we want to secure for the beloved. This again depends upon the light in which

we view him; what it is we love in him—his personal beauty, his mind, his heart. To love, is to will to another some happiness of which he is capable. God sees in us the obediential power "to become the sons of God," sharers of the Divine Nature and operation and happiness. The good He wills for us is one which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard nor heart conceived." There is sometimes a touch of this sublimity in the purer types of human affection, where the lover is severe and rigorous to the beloved, denying the lower and lesser solaces of the present, in the interest of a "fuller gain of after-bliss." So, "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth; and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." There is nothing weak, soft, indulgent, in the love of the Father for His "Beloved Son," or for Mary, or for all the saints gathered with her round the foot of the Cross.

"What is the depth." Depth is not quite the same as intensity. A shallow love, like a fire of shavings, will burn fiercely while it lasts; but yet there is little oil in the lamp of the heart. Nor is it the same as strength: though a deeper love is less easily rooted up. It speaks to us rather of latency and potentiality; of something not yet revealed; whose soundings have so far been essayed in vain. It speaks not so much of the firmness and durability of what has been revealed to us, as of the endless possibility of further revelations. Our eye can carry us to the bottom of a stream, but never to that of mid-ocean. "Oh, the depth of the riches of God's wisdom and knowledge." It is a *thesaurus*

absconditus. Oculus non vidit, absque te Domine, quæ parasti diligentibus te—The hidden treasure unseen by all eyes save God's. To love one deeply is to love him more than he thinks; more, perhaps, than we think ourselves. Perhaps the root is lost in obscurity. These unknown depths are the foundation of our hope for those richer graces which are the "uncovenanted mercies of God."

CCXL.

MEEKNESS.

Beati mites quia ipsi possidebunt terram.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth." The reward or beatitude attached to patience and gentleness is in some sense immediate and temporal; namely, victory even on earth. This beatitude is the obverse of, "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword." Violence begets violence; opposition raises opposition; and these are fruitful again to the third and fourth generation; and the end is defeat and loss; or victory at a cost out of all proportion to the original good aimed at. If severity is ever justified it is never as a means of bending the rebellious will, but as a tribute to vindictive justice or for the sake of others; or else it is a severity manifestly dictated and informed by love. Who can say that he was ever persuaded or bettered by a sarcastic, bitter, or angry word?

CCXLI.

INTELLIGENT CHARITY.

Beatus qui intelligit super egenum et pauperem.

"Blessed is he who understands about the poor and needy." Charity must be neither a cool, calculating sense of duty, nor yet a blind spasm of benevolence; but an intelligent impulse; something springing, not from the brain, but from the living heart, yet guided and approved by faith and reason. We do not go to the physician who loves us personally in preference to a stranger of greater skill; for love may intend well, but without skill it may do harm rather than good; and that, in proportion to its strength. Often under occasional pressure of emotion we may do feats of unselfishness; but we begrudge the trouble of consideration and constant watchfulness concerning the needs of others, which is needful if charity is to be a ruling habit of life, our chief occupation and business; wherein we should seek to become ever more skilled and efficient: *Non considerantes quæ sua sunt sed quæ aliorum*—"Not pondering our own interests but others'." So our Saviour, who, if He dealt differently and discriminatingly with different sicknesses of body, displays a still nicer care and particular consideration in the handling of souls where no two are alike in the eyes of the Good Shepherd, who calls His sheep—indistinguishable to a stranger—each by its name. How strange it sounds to say that the criticism and study of individual characters is an

essential of real, intelligent charity, which needs to know others and their needs and propensions; to know what will hurt, and what will heal and help; so that becoming all to all, we may in every way do our best for "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." This is intelligent charity—no blind, rule-of-thumb, same-to-everybody, wooden amiability. We cannot love or please God without studying His nature and His will; and so, neither our neighbour, who after all, is God's substitute.

CCXLII.

OMNIPOTENCE.

Fortis ut mors dilectio.

"Love is strong as death." When one sees what a frightful power for good or for evil love is, when one sees the irresistible force of charity and kindness, which seem to atone for all other deficiencies and cover a multitude of sins, one also sees in some dim way how Infinite Love is identical with Omnipotence. *Deus est caritas*—"God is love." When a sinner defies and hates God, he fights a losing battle; but when he begins to love Him, he grows strong and wrests the sword from God's hand and at last leads Him captive in chains. Of course it is really God who thus binds Himself through the instrumentality of a poor, sinful, weak human heart, to which He loves to be in captivity. *Sagittæ tuæ acutæ*, says David, of the God of love, *in cordibus inimicorum regis; populi sub te cadent;* the King's enemies fall, slain with darts of love, in thousands.

They fall enemies, and rise lovers. Be such the weapons of our warfare; spiritual, not carnal.

CCXLIII.

GOD'S VOICE IN REASON.

Audiam quid loquatur in me Dominus Deus.

"I will listen to what God says in me." We find converse with God one-sided work and hard to sustain. Yet is this not due to the anthropomorphic form of our imaginations? Is He not always speaking to us; not exactly in His works, which is a metaphorical speech; but more formally in our own every true thought and good wish? *Erat lux vera quæ illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum*—He is the true light of every mind; the First Sayer of our every true word; the First Thinker of our every true thought: and He is also in every true thought and good desire that is communicated to us from and through other souls, by word or writing? Is not this the only way in which we have a right to expect Him to speak? Were He to thunder in the clouds and form words, would it not still be but using a creature as an instrument? What difference is it whether the instrument is my own soul or that of another? Nor need we confound this natural speech with revelation and prophecy, except in affirming that they are equally speech. For revelation, whether given to our own mind directly or through that of another, is miraculous and marked as such; the natural sequence of thought-phenomena is broken through, and the

mind seems to follow a coherent train of ideas suggested, as it were, by the speech of another, though really by some mysterious quasi-instinctive internal impulse; something analogous to those phenomena which are supposed to prove double personality in one soul. Still, if God's action on the mind in the natural order does not satisfy the strictest definition of speech, yet He speaks no less truly than one who teaches us to teach ourselves by reasoning and guiding our steps aright, and supplying the conditions needful that truth may come home to us with its own authority. And is not the authority of Truth and of God identical? As in the dictate of conscience, so in that of reason, we should recognize the voice of a *person* who is subsistent Rightness and Truth. This is the secret, perhaps, of Augustine's colloquial method of reasoning. What reason says to him, God says to him; and he answers to his own reasonings as to the voice of God. Through the defect of the instrument or medium, the message is often garbled and perverted, nor can it at all times be accepted as Divine. Yet whatever truth there is in it is God's own Word, conveyed to the soul. Thus as God is always serving us and labouring for us in Nature, and we do not recognize it, so He is continually speaking to our inmost heart, and we take the words as from no-whence or as from ourselves. "There stands one in the midst of you whom ye know not." "He was in the world and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." No doubt it is a surprise and a light when, after having found much

help and guidance from some written treatise, without ever concerning ourself about the author, we learn that he wrote it for us and sent it to us. It was truly his speech all along: but only now do we refer it to him as such. *Deus docuisti me a juventute mea*—"O God, it was Thou who wert teaching me from my youth upwards."

CCXLIV.

THE FULNESS OF FAITH.

Baptisantes eos in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.

"Baptizing them in the Name of (*i.e.*, into the creed or confession of faith in) the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." Baptism is a sign of discipleship with a prophet or revealer. The Baptism of Christ means discipleship in the fulness of revelation. It is the Sacrament of Faith or illumination. The Trinity is the full development of the imperfect faith of Judaism. It includes the Incarnation as part of a whole. It reveals God as a Father; as generating a coequal Son who has given us power to become sons by adoption and to dare to say *Pater noster*. It reveals the Son made Flesh in order to "show us the Father," to speak the deep things of eternity in human language and imagery. The "power" by which we become sons of God is the Spirit of Adoption, won for us by the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Sacrifice, and poured down upon the body of the Church as her quickening soul. Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Passiontide, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, all are epitomised in

Trinity Sunday. This is that rich faith which gives an inexhaustible significance to creation and life, which gathers the "manifold of phenomena" into a connected whole; without which we must grope in darkness and the shadow of death. Unitarians may live for the glory of God; we live for the glory of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

CCXLV.

DEATH.

Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur, ut requiescant a laboribus suis, et opera illorum sequuntur illos.

"Blessed are the dead." This might be called the ninth beatitude, were it not rather the eight in epitome. If poverty, meekness, purity, peace, sorrow; if all the world flies from as saddening or wearying, is pronounced blessed, or beatifying by the lips of truth, it is but the fulness of the same dispensation which takes the sting from death, the "King of Terrors," and says, "Happy are the dead." Yet it is not said without restriction. As it is not the poor, but the poor in spirit; so neither is it the dead, but the dead who die in the Lord, who are blessed. "In the Lord" is symbolized and explained by the death of St. Joseph in the arms of Jesus and Mary. Our life is our interest. For those whose highest interest is in the Divine good, in sympathy with God and His saints, with Jesus and Mary, death is no breach of life, but the estuary where the river of time widens silently into the sea of eternity.

Yet to us onlookers the body is the theatre and whole expression-medium of spiritual vitality, which therefore seems abruptly extinct in the moment of death. And death being the negation of life, those whose life was intense, many-sided, full of active interests die more, than do the languid, apathetic and narrow-lived. Their death is a shock to the imagination; *visi sunt oculis insipientium mori; illi autem sunt in pace;* but for them it is no shock or breach of continuity. The sun shines on serenely for all that the passing clouds cut us off from his influence. It is not the spirit that leaves the body; but the body whose grasp on its quickening principle gives way.

"That they may rest from their labours." There are times when the merely negative aspects of death seem so attractive as to explain the adherence of millions to that religious system, which seeks beatitude in perfect extinction or re-absorption into that All, from which, it says, we are differenced out by desire, and by the wish to exist and to enjoy. Is there not something that satisfies in the stillness of a dark night; or of a lifeless desert; or of a frozen, motionless sea—as it might be, in the beginning of that final state of congealment into which, according to some modern physicists, all things are cooling. Socrates seemed to find more attraction in sound, dreamless slumber than in all the days of his intense vitality put together. Yet it is only because we fallaciously conceive ourselves *conscious* of the relief from labour that the mere desisting can attract us positively. To be conscious of no conflict or strife

with Nature; but only of perfect harmony with her universal process, is indeed a consciousness of rest; but it is the rest of a distinct personality in the active contemplation and enjoyment of deliverance from a narrower to a fuller and more unfettered existence. Only verbally, and through a fallacy of the imagination, can a man ever suppose that he desires extinction. For every desire is for well-being or better-being; and therefore for being. It is the cessation of pain, weariness, and sorrow, and not the cessation of existence, that we are so keen for at times when our gaze is concentrated rather on our present miseries than on our future hopes; when our thought is rather on what we would fly from than whither we would fly—on earth rather than on heaven.

"That they may rest from their labours." Not such rest as God often provides for us here—a momentary pause, to sit down and breathe and begin again; moments of light between darkness and darkness; brief lulls in the storms of temptation; rifts in the clouds of depression; snatches of success amid failure; of pleasant surprise amid continual disappointments—moments whose function is to suggest the eternal *Sabbatismus* "that remains for the people of God," and to animate us with faith and hope to struggle on, until seeming defeat is crowned with victory. Eternal rest is the rest of the Eternal; as eternal life is the life of the Eternal. It is the repose of the Divine activity; the sleep of infinite energizing; the stillness of the all-mover. It is the rest of "the Only-begotten, who is in the bosom of

the Father," as it might be, an infant slumbering on its mother's breast, and yet "all things were made by Him and without Him nothing was made. That which was made, in Him was light . . . and the light shone in darkness" (so, with Augustine and Aquinas). How tranquil and unmoved in itself; yet how swift, how potent, how multiform in its activity is that Source of light. All things in Him were light; and God said, "Let there be light, and light was." *Ipse dixit, et facta sunt.* And His very "saying" is eternal; involving no breach of the everlasting silence.

"That they may rest from their labours." As eternal life, so also eternal rest enters into the saints, even here on earth with every new access of sanctifying grace. In the midst of all their struggles and labours for their own souls and the souls of others, their heart sleeps like a tranquil lake. While others rise before dawn, after brief slumber, and hurry fretfully through joyless days to restless nights, "He giveth His beloved ones sleep." Faith is the oil that smooths the ruffled waters of fear and fretful anxiety. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid; ye *believe* in God; believe also in Me;"—faith, which realizes the invisible, and resolves visible realities into dreams. "I sleep," says the soul to her beloved, "but my heart waketh." All the activity of outward life is but slumber; while the restful gaze of the loving, tranquillized heart is a wakefulness akin to His of whom it is said: "Thy keeper will not slumber; lo, He that keepeth Israel will neither slumber nor sleep."

CCXLVI.

FAILURE.

Justum deduxit Dominus per vias rectas et complevit labores illius.

"God has guided the just man and has brought his labours to perfection." No good enterprise for God's glory ever comes to naught, however it may seem to be interrupted and frustrated. When the learner is weary and discouraged, the master-hand takes the poor unfinished scrawl, and turns out of it something wonderful and beyond expectation. Indeed we can never see more than the beginning of even what seem our most finished and successful works. It is proverbial that the most useful men in many departments have died long before they were felt; and often in full conviction of their utter failure. Augustine, to his own seeming, lived for the Church at Hippo, which collapsed for ever almost immediately. But in God's design he lived for the universal Church and for all ages.

"I Paul, a prisoner for the Lord." God who has chosen him and fitted him for so glorious an apostolate, binds him hand and foot in prison, where his talents and energy must lie idle. Yet it is to his imprisonment we owe some of his most helpful epistles. Who can compare the good they have wrought and will yet work in the Church, with the effects his liberty might have produced, or say whether his idleness was loss or gain to the Kingdom of Christ? Again, the will and desire to do good is never inefficacious, but is an indestructible force

which will not return to the First Cause till it has effected that whereto it was sent. "But the power of Christ is not bound."

Dante's *Commedia* was the cry of a disappointed and banished man. Had his life been a success according to his own ideas, should we ever have heard of him? And so of St. Severinus and his *De Consolatione*. Was it not the very failure of Christ and His martyrs that completed and crowned their labours?

CCXLVII.

SS. PETER AND PAUL.

Gloriosi principes terræ, quomodo in vita sua dilexerunt se, ita in morte non sunt separati.

"Glorious princes of the earth. As they loved one another in life, so in death they were not divided." To estimate the glory of their princedom we must look around us, and backwards and forwards; we must view them going hand in hand to martyrdom; we must see them reigning with unbroken sway in the long line of their successors; we must see them on one throne judging the tribes of Israel. We must look at the influence which the See of Peter and Paul has had so far in the world's history, as the centre of light and stability, as the guardian of morals, the protector of liberty; how it has battled against the powers of Hell within and without; against error and corruption; how it has always come out victorious when men least expected, through the faith of Peter. We must consider its wonderful moral strength at present in the extremity

of its temporal weakness; its sway not only over the faithful, but over those that sit in darkness and the shadow of death. If Leo has influence it is so far as he feels himself to be Peter and Paul, and lives his office. And shall we dare to read the future of Holy Church, perhaps yet, as De Maistre suggests, in her infancy? Does not the face of the heavens bid us hope for a far more literal fulfilment of prophecy; that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;" and that His glory shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together? We know when a flower is unfolded and full-blown. Is it not evident that the conception of the Catholic Church, of Catholic truth and Catholic holiness is capable of yet greater expansion; that it has not yet exhaled its sweetest fragrance; or donned its firmest and brightest colours; that the Apostolate of Peter and Paul is far from ended, that their words have not yet gone into all lands, nor their voices reached to the ends of the earth? *Gloriosi principes terræ*—"Glorious princes of the earth," for they are but the vicars of Him who is King of kings, Lord of lords, to whom it is said, "Ask of Me and I will give thee the Nations for thy heritage;" and "of His Kingdom there shall be no end;" and again, *Principatus super humerum ejus*, His princely power lies hidden in the Cross that weights His shoulder, that key of Heaven which He bequeathed to Peter. And this same Cross has been the weapon of Peter's triumph, *Mites terram possidebunt;* even in this world the meek triumph. While Satan assailed the Church

from without by persecution, she but struck root deeper for every blast; and then it was he tried to persuade Peter to take the sword that he might perish by it. So far as the Church has triumphed it has been out of weakness and by faith. God lifted Peter out of the dust, and Paul out of the mire, that He might set them with the princes of His people, with Michael, and Gabriel, and the great ones of the Heavenly Court.

"They loved one another in life and in death they were not divided." Different in antecedents, in temperament, in education, they were knit together by the common object of their supremest and deepest love, so that all other divergencies seemed infinitely trivial and superficial. We have all indeed "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," but how differently apprehended and appreciated; how little real, communicable interest in these as compared with other matters; how little spontaneous exchange of ideas; how few ideas to exchange—old, hammered-out platitudes that lie in our minds as they entered them, and rattle about there like coins in a cash-box—no part of our mind or interest; dead formulæ and not living truths. If interest be life, and if eternal life be to know the one true God and Jesus Christ; that is, to get a truer estimate of God, a deeper insight into the Incarnate Word, there should be no love such as that of two souls advancing day by day in sympathetic knowledge and love of things divine. What other high or noble interest is not here formally included and ineffably transcended?

Et in morte non sunt separati—"And in death

they were not divided." What greater grace could friendship ask than that thou—the man of one mind with myself, my guide, my familiar, with whom I ate the food of sweetness and walked together with thee in the house of God—shouldst leave this world with me hand in hand; and ford the angry waters with me; and with me touch the shore in the early morning, and fall down at His feet whom we have known here through a glass darkly, but then shall know face to face? What completer merging of soul with soul can be thought of than that which faith begins here and perfects hereafter? *Non sunt separati:* they were spared the slight pang of even a brief interruption of their spiritual harmony. But even when this divine seal of approval is withheld, death has little or no sting for the noblest love. *Caritas nunquam excidit*—"Charity never dies." The substantial bond is strengthened and not weakened, though its manifestation is deferred. *Mors absorpta est in victoria; fortis ut mors dilectio*—"Death is swallowed up in victory; for love is as strong as death"—nay, stronger.

CCXLVIII.

FELLOWSHIP IN SUFFERING.

Quos eadem fides et passio vere fecit esse germanos.

"Whom the same faith and the same sorrow made brothers indeed."[1] Brotherhood in the Catholic faith, where there is real faith, is far deeper than appears. Though disunited in all else,

[1] SS. John and Paul.

Catholics will hold together, *usque ad mortem*, when faith is in question. The substantial tie of natural brotherhood is compatible with much surface disagreement among the members of a family. But community of conviction or judgment in any point is often closer than any other kind of fraternity; still more, where both are sufferers for the same cause or conviction, whether it be the suffering of persecution or that suffering inseparable from firm belief in ideals which are in strong contrast with realities. The love of those who have fought for the same cause is sometimes tenderer and deeper, if they have fought and failed: if they have shared defeat in common. *Eadem fides* is much, but *eadem passio* is far more. This it is that crowns the love and brotherhood of Christ and all His saints and martyrs.

CCXLIX.

CHRIST'S HERITAGE.

Pro nostra et totius mundi salute.

"For our own salvation and for that of the whole world." These and similar words in the Mass are like a stream of cool air let into a close room. They lift us for an instant out of our narrow personal groove, and set us on a high mountain and show us all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory thereof. And we hear the voice of the tempter saying to Christ and to His Church: "All these will I give if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." *Non tali auxilio! Vade retro!*—not on such terms; not at the cost of the smallest lie or the compromise

of a single principle; but by His arm and help who says, *Postula a me et dabo tibi gentes hæreditatem tuam et possessionem tuam terminos terræ*—"Ask of Me and I will give thee the nations and the whole earth for thy heritage." Every Mass is a reiterated *postulatio* or asking for this blood-bought heritage of the Catholic or world-wide Church.

CCL.

EXPECTANCY.

Ecce sicut oculi servorum in manibus dominorum suorum ita oculi nostri ad Dominum Deum nostrum donec misereatur nostri.

"Even as the eyes of a servant to the hand of his master, or of a maiden to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes turn to our God till He have mercy upon us"—with the eager, anxious look of a well-mannered dog waiting for scraps from the table, now hopeful and alert at some sign of movement; now disappointed and despondent because nothing has come of it. God sometimes seems cruel in toying with our agony of hunger, desire, and uncertainty; but it is the cruelty of Him who restrains his love that it may leap out with greater force—*O mulier, magna est fides tua!*—"O woman, great is thy faith!"—who holds back, to whet our desire, so that being asked more He may give more. *Et tu das illis escam*—"And Thou givest them food." To each living creature its own food, according to its proper nature and kind of life—trees and flowers, birds, beasts, and fishes—to natural man, the food

of the mind, in the works of creation, the book of Nature; that food which kindles and sustains the fire of love which is the life of the soul; to supernatural man, the food of supernatural life, "the daily Manna of the soul," Him, whose words are "spirit and life." To each particular soul its individual and characteristic food, suited to its own nature and necessities. *In tempore opportuno, i.e.*, as the necessity arises, but not in advance. Our daily bread is doled out to us on asking *toties quoties*. Nor always at the time when we think we want it, but *in tempore opportuno*, when it is really best for us. Children cry for food out of mere petulance, between meals and at all manner of absurd times; and for the most absurd and unwholesome things. *Aperis tu manum tuam et imples omne animal benedictione*—"Thou openest Thy hand and fillest all with plenteousness." God is not grasping or close-fisted, but altogether *magnificus*, doing everything on a grand and liberal scale. He fills our desires to overflowing, being "more ready to hear than we to pray; and wont to give more than we ask or desire." It is the fault of the narrowness of our desires that the results are so poor. *Aperi os tuum, et implebo illud*—"Open thy mouth, and I will fill it." There is the condition. He will not force the food through our closed teeth. Every desire comes from Him, and every enlargement of desire; but it is ours to foster it or to quench it. To be generous to God is not to give to Him—for what can we give?—but to take from Him liberally; not to refuse His liberality or to thwart His love; but to

open both hands at once, to stoop down and "drink of the torrent in the way."

CCLI.

THE VISITATION.

Maria abiit in montana cum festinatione.

"Mary arose in haste and went into the hill-country." She bore within her the full object of her joy and love and praise. What more did she need? *Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi qui pascitur inter lilia*—"My Beloved is mine and I am His." Why did she not rest alone or retire to the desert to be alone with her Beloved, to bury herself in prayer and contemplative ecstasy, and to forget the world? But Gabriel has hardly vanished before she rises in haste to pass over the rough hills of Judea in search of human sympathy, of one like-minded whom God had called to bear a part in the mystery of the Incarnation; that they may rejoice together, heart calling to heart, in their common love. The joy and praise of each of the blessed is intensified by that of every other, and by the enthusiasm of the collective multitudes. "Lo, one who will intensify our love," is the cry of the blessed on every new arrival. Mary's *Magnificat* was far sweeter in the ears of God for being echoed by St. Elizabeth and St. John Baptist, and drew much increase of fervent inspiration from their sympathy which it would have lacked in solitude. Retirement from the unsympathetic may at times be in the interest of God's glory; but retirement from the sympathetic never.

So eager is love for sympathy, that it will labour ceaselessly to create it where it does not exist. The communion of saints is not indeed of the essence but of the integrity and normal fulness of their beatitude. Our feeble love and praise needs all the help it can get, and borrows the hearts and tongues of others to supply the deficiency of its own. What does it all mean except that it is God who in us and all creatures, as by an instrument, loves and praises Himself; that it is the voice of all creation which is seeking for utterance through every narrow outlet, and never able to disburden itself to the full.

CCLII.

LIBERALITY.

Si multum tibi fuerit, abundanter tribue; si exiguum libenter impertiri stude.

"If thou hast much, give plentifully; if thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little."[1] God gives only that we may give. Our very life is giving, self-diffusion. "Increase and multiply" is imperative for all; if not in one form, then in another. *Lauda sterilis et quæ non paris*—"Give praise, thou that art sterile." But why? Because more are the children of the sterile than of the fertile. The priest and apostle leaves a less for a greater self-diffusion. *Ecce ego et filios quos dedit mihi Dominus*—"Behold me and the children God has given me," he says; and *Quis mihi genuit hos*—who hath brought me forth these? It is the

[1] Tobias iv. 9.

very spirit of poverty to give grandly, extravagantly, and "not to count the cost;" to be improvident and reckless when God is the recipient of our alms. "Go, sell *all* that thou hast, and give," it says; whatever that "all" be: the labour of our head, or our hands, or our heart. It is by giving *all* that we get more to give. Whatever we hoard or reserve is prey for moth, or rust, or robbery.

"If thou hast little." Those who have little are apt to think themselves exempt; and that because they are not in a position to do much or to succeed; therefore they are not bound to try or to do anything. There is danger to such lest the spirit of giving die in them. The "widow's mite" shows us that the greatness of the gift is measured by the diligence and gladness of the giver, *Hilarem datorem diligit Deus.*

CCLIII.

LONGSUFFERING.

Arundinem quassatum non confringet.

"He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax," *i.e.*, He will not cast us off or condemn us as worthless for all our feebleness and coldness so long as He can discern in us the remotest capacity for strength and love; and this He can discern where it eludes every other eye. Whatever waning strength, whatever smouldering spark is there, is proof of His inbiding presence and love, which clings to the soul as tenaciously as the soul does to the body. For while there is life there

is hope. One defect diverts our eye from a thousand amiabilities. Ours is the owl's eye, or the bat's, that finds rest in darkness, and is pained by brightness. The eagle eye of God and His Saints is diverted from a thousand darknesses to the last expiring spark of grace by which He is fascinated as by the face of His own image. *Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis. Aspice et respice in faciem Christi tui*—Turn Thy face from my sins, and look upon the face of Thy Christ. For the sins that are in me are my very own, my sole originalities; while the good that is in me is Christ. *Nunc vivo—jam non ego sed, Christus in me vivit*—"Now I live—not I, but Christ lives in me."

CCLIV.

HELPING GOD.

Tu ad me venis!

"Thou comest to me!" "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and Thou comest to me!" He whom we need everywhere; on whom we are absolutely dependent; to whom we must come for everything; comes to us, needy, dependent, in the poverty of love; sick for our worthless love, craving and hungering and languishing for it. When He chose to be our Lover it could not be otherwise: *Tu venis ad me!* We cannot love those who are indifferent to our love and have no need of it. In Creation, in the Incarnation, in the Eucharist, in His Mystic Body, in humanity He has become needy and dependent on our love. "I have need of thee," He says to us. *Date et dabitur*—Give and

it shall be given you, pity for pity, gift for gift, service for service, and love for love.

Cujus corrigiam calceamenti non sum dignus solvere —"Whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to loose." The greatest of the sainted prophets, canonized by the words of the Word, counts himself unworthy of the least service to the feet of Christ, to whom it is the angels' privilege to minister; to whom God Himself is enslaved by love: *Transiens ministrabit illis* —Going among them He will serve them, He their Lord and Master washes their feet: *Ego Dominus et magister lavi vobis pedes.* And yet penitents are permitted to serve those feet with their tears and spikenard day by day; and to minister to the little ones of Christ not a cup of cold water, but the well of water springing up to everlasting life.

CCLV.

THE INTERNAL LAW.

Legem meam in corde eorum scribam.

"I will write My law in their hearts." God has written the law of nature in our understanding, which of itself is as hard and cold as the rocks of Sinai. It tells us of duties and sanctions with some dim hint of a personal legislator behind all, who exacts these dues and enforces these sanctions. It is when the personal lovingness and lovableness of God is revealed to us that His law is written in our hearts, and we begin to say: "How have I loved Thy law, O Lord;" and at the same time that law is condensed into the one universal law of love,

which St. Ignatius calls the *interna caritatis et amoris illius lex quam Spiritus Sanctus inscribere et in cordibus imprimere solet*—an instinct rather than a rule. As long as our formal aim is ethical rectitude and legal propriety we are as a child who laboriously copies a head-line, stroke by stroke, with many a blot and quaver; who proceeds *non in spiritu amoris sed cum perturbatione timoris*—not in the spirit of love, but with the perturbation of fear—concentrated on the letter, forgetful of the sense. The finished writer hardly knows that he is writing, or that he is writing correctly. His spirit clothes itself spontaneously in the outer sign. A man may easier forget the spirit in the letter; than the letter in the spirit. None who has the spirit can despise the letter; but only hold it subordinate.

"Who follows Me," says Christ, "walks not in darkness," but is as one who follows a bright light. For human nature, the only practical guide to conduct is personal love. All ethical theorizing about beatitude as a motive, and reasonableness as a norm of right conduct, is mere air-beating. Its one use is that God may be "justified in His sayings, and be victorious when criticized"—*ut justificeris in sermonibus tuis, et vincas cum judicaris;* and that every tongue should confess God: the tongue of philosophy and science and art, as well as the tongue of faith and of healthy instinct. As reason is the norm of rational conscience, so Christ is the norm of Christian conscience: *via, veritas, et vita*—the way and the end; the method and the motive. And what Socrates remarks of conscience is also

true of the guidance of Christ's example; it is chiefly negative and prohibitive. It is far easier to be sure what Christ would not do under given circumstances than to be sure what He would do It is only by uncertain analogies that the life of a Nazarene carpenter of two thousand years ago, endowed with unthinkable supernatural prerogatives, with a mission of universal redeemer of humanity, can be positively applied as a pattern to the very unsupernatural man and woman of decadent civilization.

"Thy Word is a light to my feet and a lamp to my way." All that David says of God's written Word and testimonies and laws and justifications and statutes, may be understood eminently and prophetically of the Eternal and Incarnate Word, who is the Way, the Word, the Testimony, the Covenant, and Law, and Justification. "Blessed are the spotless in *the Way*, who walk in *the Law* of the Lord. . . . Oh, that my ways were made straight for the keeping of *Thy Justice*. . . . In my heart have I hid *Thy Word*, that I may not sin against Thee. . . . I am a pilgrim on earth, hide not *Thy Commandment* from me. . . . *Thy Testimony* is my meditation. . . . My soul hath slumbered from weariness; hath cleaved to the dust: quicken me, strengthen me after *Thy Word*. . . . Incline my heart to *Thy Testimony*. . . . Take not even the *Word of Truth* from my lips. . . . I will speak of *Thy Testimony* in the face of kings and shall not be afraid. . . . I have lifted up my hands to *Thy Commandments*, which I have loved.

. . . I was mindful of *Thy Eternal Judgments* and was consoled. . . . My heart fainted for those sinners who have left *Thy Law*." And so throughout.

CCLVI.

BAD COMMUNIONS.

Excolentes culicem, camelum deglutientes.

"Straining out gnats; swallowing camels." True scrupulosity! We are terrified by the idea of communicating because of some foul thought that has pursued us, or some outburst of sudden passion, or because we are full of distractions and worries, as though this refreshment were not primarily intended for the tempted, the weak, and the weary. But if it is only some chronic dislike; some little unkindness, some coldness and inconsideration, we approach confidently without any apprehension of being choked; and then we are surprised that the habitual results of our Communions are slight and imperceptible. Venial sins against fraternal union are the likest to mortal, and stop the channels of further grace all but entirely. To "discern the Lord's Body" is to discern that "we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that Body." It was in this that the Corinthians[1] were sacrilegious communicants; for that they were divided, even in their Eucharists and love-feasts, into clans and cliques, rich and poor, high and low. They did not wait for one another, but each feasted by him-

[1] 1 Cor. xi.

self and with his special friends; despising the unity of the Church of God and shaming the poor by leaving them out in the cold.

Qui intingit manum mecum in paropside, hic me tradet—"He who dips his hand with Me in the sop shall betray Me;" so says our Lord to every one who professes to be true to Him as He lies veiled in the Host, and yet is a traitor to Him as He lies veiled in His brethren, in His little ones. "Whereto art thou come?" He seems to say; "Dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" for "If a man say 'I love God' and love not his brother, he is a liar."

Or else: "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?"—which garment all interpret to be charity; but not all advert to the fact that it is charity considered formally as touching our neighbour. It is the garment which makes us all alike, and is substituted for that wherein we are all unlike. It is our common enthusiasm for the same Good which likens and binds us to It, and thereby likens and binds us to one another. He who welcomes publicans and sinners, who compels the blind and the maimed and the halt to enter in and sit "with the princes of His people," says of the unkind and uncharitable: "Bind him hand and foot and cast him into outer darkness."

CCLVII.

UNCOVENANTED MERCIES.

Spiritus ubi vult spirat.

"The Spirit breathes where it chooses." This is what the theological mind is sometimes inclined to resent, for there can be no science of that which cannot be tied down to law and reduced to formulæ. Where does God's Spirit breathe? Wherever it chooses. Whence comes it? We know not. Whither does it go? Who can tell? Grace refuses to be known in itself or in its causes, except within the narrowest limits. It comes where and when it is least expected. "No one can say, The Lord Jesus," *i.e.*, can hail Him as Lord "except by the Holy Ghost;" and since "of ourselves we are not sufficient to think any good," we must recognize grace or its beginnings in every good desire. God is true to His covenanted mercies; and those with whom He has covenanted would be presumptuous to rely on what is not covenanted. If He agrees with us for a penny we shall receive a penny. But is our eye to be evil because He is good; because He chooses to give to the last as to us; because being just and generous to us, He is more generous to others; or because the heretic and the heathen shall often take precedence of the Catholic; or the layman of the priest; or the secular of the religious; or the penitent of the perfect? There is no excuse for those who neglect God's covenanted mercies. "Those who believe not shall be damned," is

certainly the law for those to whom belief is offered. As to others, we leave them with confidence to the justice and goodness of God, who has not revealed to us the laws of His dealings with them. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? This only we know, that truth is reached by fidelity to the truth in every order, natural and supernatural; and those who are faithful in a little are rewarded above those who are faithless in much. "Many shall come from the East and West" of whom it will be said: "I have not found such faith in Israel."

CCLVIII.

THE END OF MAN.

Homo creatus est ut laudet.

"Man was created to praise." Praise is the utterance of love, and love is the joy of the intellect in the vision of goodness. *Spero videre bona Domini in terra viventium*—"I hope to gaze upon the goodness of the Lord in the Land of Life." Utterance, is the proper act of an intelligence, the expression of the truth and of one's joy in the truth. What the lark does by instinct, the intellect does freely and intelligently, pouring itself out in "useless" utterance; because it is full and must unburden itself. Secondarily, such faculty of utterance is for the good of others, that the gladness may be not only uttered but imparted and multiplied. Primarily it is *propter se*—"for its own sake." The sun would shine as brightly were there no worlds around for it to warm or quicken. "I

only pipe," says the poet, "because I must; and sing but as the linnets sing." Associated praise is easier, intenser, more harmonic, less painfully conscious of its own feebleness—all the difference between cheering with a crowd, and cheering alone, or cheering 'mid a hooting crowd. But to give every expression in our power to the joy that is within us is as imperative an instinct of the rational soul of man, as it is of the sensitive soul of the song-bird. All the truest art the world has seen, has been stimulated if not purely and wholly, yet at least principally by this instinct of self-expression for its own sake; the desire to embody what we see and feel in words or actions or images, or lines or colours or marble or music—each according to that medium of expression in which he is skilled. The desire for sympathy, is an accessory motive which does not tarnish the purity of the former; but rather intensifies it. For utterance tends naturally, though not necessarily, to draw other souls into accord with our own. But the direct quest of praise and success is as debasing as the quest of money. The purest poetry is that in which the writer seeks simply to please himself; to produce the image of his soul; to disburden himself of the "word" he has conceived. Yet if he look to communicating his joy to others; or invite them to share his gladness; his act is more full, more intense, more unegoistic. But the true poet in every department, is he who, like God diffuses his goodness from its very superabundance; to whom, the thing well done or well said, is a joy for its own

sake: "Thou art My Son; to-day have I begotten Thee;" "My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

CCLIX.

HUMAN FICKLENESS.

Non se credebat eis Jesus.

"Jesus did not trust Himself to them," for "He knew what was in man," and how those who are with us to-day are against us to-morrow; and that he who leans his whole weight on aught else but God, leans upon a broken reed. Nor was He bitter or cynical through the recognition of this truth; for if He knew that the flesh was weak, He also knew that the spirit was willing; and that our *Hosannas* are not insincere at the time, because they are soon to be changed to *Crucifige*. He values every atom of our feeble, fickle love as far as it goes, but does not for a moment overvalue it. We are utterly surprised and shocked, if we find that our friends are not always loyal to us; or if they are inconstant and unreliable. Yet such defects are quite compatible with very true and tender love, as a little self-knowledge would show us. In a sense Peter loved our Lord most dearly in the very moment when he denied Him. The present affection he had testified to in his boasting was most real. He erred in speaking for the future, forgetting the mutability of our feeling.

CCLX.

TRANSFORMING LIGHTS.

Nonne hic est qui sedebat et mendicabat?

"Is not this he that used to sit by the wayside and beg?" God finds the soul sitting by the wayside, in the attitude of hopelessness, while others come up and pass by on their road to salvation and leave it behind, lonely and desolate. He finds it in beggary and rags, asking for the husks of swine, ignorant of the treasures of Christ, and of the Bread of Angels. He strikes His light into our dead eyes, and lo! we are the same and not the same; like, and yet unlike; for grace takes the fashion of the vessel into which it is poured. We sat; but now we walk and run; we begged; but now we are rich. How this change is brought about in most cases we know not, but "this we know: that, whereas we were blind, now we see;" and to know that we see is to be certain.

"That Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes." It is only through the Sacred Humanity of our Lord that we can see the Divinity. He who formed Adam from the slime of the earth, formed for Himself a body by the Holy Ghost from the Virgin Mary. He is the unction of our dead eyes; the Word of the Father lisped in mortal language: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." "No man hath seen God at any time; the Only-Begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

CCLXI.

THE ALL-SEEING.

Eloquia oris mei et meditatio cordis mei in conspectu tuo semper, Domine adjutor meus et redemptor meus.

"The words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart are ever in Thy sight, O Lord, my helper and redeemer." Our words and imaginings pass through our lips and our heart, and leave no more trace in memory than a ship in the waters. We live just in the present and the penumbra of the dark past. But to God all is present. We are in His sight what we should be in our own were our whole past and future crowded into our present clear consciousness, and this because He is our "Helper" in our every thought and word and act—even in those which turn His help to His own dishonour, and with regard to which He is both *Adjutor meus et Redemptor meus*—"My Helper and my Redeemer."

CCLXII.

OUR DOUBLE THIRST.

Si quis sitit veniat ad me et bibet.

"If any thirst, let him come to Me and drink." *Amare et amari* is the double thirst of man's insatiable soul, or the double aspect of its single thirst. There is a great power of loving latent in the narrowest heart, and capable of indefinite expansion, though often choked and well-nigh extinguished by indulged selfishness. When once this thirst is

wakened in us we become weary of our narrow egoism, and seek to go out of ourselves and live for others, to find an object that will stay the strange craving which is like a hungry wolf within us—an appetite not our own, and of which we can give no account, which is in truth God, the First Cause, the Last End, working in us, even as He works for the general good in the instincts of senseless Nature, urging all things to Himself, calling His children home. So He uses the human heart as an instrument whereby to love Himself, and long for Himself, and praise Himself; and to love and praise all else in Him and for Him; to love those whom He loves and as He loves them. And at first this voice is strange to us; its accents indistinguishable. We fancy it is some echo of our own voice; some confused egoism mistaking its own reflex for altruism. But as its meaning and purpose becomes more evident and unmistakable, so it is seen to be no expression of our own limited wants, but of the will of the all-loving God, which is sealed on the very substance of our spiritual nature; who has made us first for Himself and for others, and secondarily for our own sakes. Nothing, then, can stay this craving but that full object towards which it drives us—God, and all things in their true relation to God; the *Bonum Divinum*, or Divine end in creation; not my own solitary end, which is an abstraction and perhaps a contradiction, but that universal end of which God has made me to be an instrument. In no single person or creature can I find rest if I regard him in violent isolation from

God and his fellow-creatures; nor is he ever lovable in the same way or to the same degree when thus perversely exalted into an end. Love in its childhood and weakness is narrow and exclusive, easily corrupted into "a conspiracy of two against the universe." In its maturity it is all-embracing, yet without loss of fulness and depth, approximating towards the perfection of Divine charity, with which it has a common centre of radiation. *Si quis sitit veniat ad me*—He who wants something to love which will draw out, expand, and strengthen all his capabilities of loving, let him love Me and Mine. And he who is athirst with an intense desire of being loved by one whose love is deep, penetrating, lasting, and exalted, let him come to Me and drink his fill. The fondest human love can never sate him, unless he wilfully blind himself to its limitations, forgetting how short, inconstant, undiscerning it is at the best. And how little do we find of such love in many cases; how lonely and unloved we are outside the narrowest circle, while our hearts crave to be universally loved, and shrink from the censure and dislike of the meanest of our fellow-men, thus showing that we were created to receive universal love. If those who are called from lower to higher, from caring for wife or husband to caring for Christ and His Kingdom, ever seem to violate this Divine instinct which bids us love and be loved; if they are ever lonely, unloving and unloved, self-centred, narrow, it is so far only as they fail to understand and realize their vocation to a higher love which holds in itself every other, as

the light of the sun holds every lesser light. If in Christ and Christ's little ones they do not find father and mother and child, and spouse and brethren; if they do not pour out upon them and receive from them a hundred-fold that affection which they might have had in a narrow sphere of a single household, they are indeed "of all men the most miserable." *Dominus pars hæreditatis meæ et calicis mei; tu es qui restitues hæreditatem meam mihi* —"The Lord is the portion of my heritage and cup. It is Thou who wilt restore my inheritance to me." To love and be loved is man's heritage and birthright; if for God's love we seem to forsake it, it is only seeming. He is bound to restitution and heavy interest.

CCLXIII.

THE GLORY OF THE SUM OF THINGS.

Viditque Deus cuncta quæ fecerat, et ecce bonum valde.

"God viewed all together what He had made, and lo! it was very good." We can but see His works singly and partially, and can say of each, so far as it is, and so far as we can see or understand it, *bonum est*. Could we be, like Paul, rapt up to the throne of God, and from that height survey the entire kingdom of His works unitedly and connectedly, we should see that the excellence of all (*cuncta*) was something indefinitely more glorious than the sum of their single excellences. Of this universal order and end we can have only the remotest, analogical conjecture; as from a few brief passages we can see that a dramatist has consum-

mate power and a sense of unity and order, although we have no notion as to the gist of the piece in question. Any complex unity viewed partially must necessarily seem out of joint, unmeaning, and crooked.

CCLXIV.

JERUSALEM.

Videns civitatem flevit super illam.

"And seeing the city, He wept over it." "Seeing." Tears, the children of grief; and grief, the offspring of love; and all, the fruit of vision. "Seeing," as God only sees, to whom past and future are the setting of the present, who sees "within the green the moulder'd tree, and towers fall'n as soon as built;" who, as He saw the walls of Sion rise stone upon stone, the glory of the earth, saw in the same gaze her glory trampled in the dust, her walls cast down to the ground, so that not a stone was left upon a stone. If tragedy is that which begins in joy and hope, and ends in misery and despair, God well may weep, to whose view is presented the continual tragedy of souls destined to glory and doomed to shame and destruction; each a veritable "city of God" founded on the eternal rock, girded with tower and fortress, gleaming with gold and marble, hallowed by the sanctuary of the Divine presence, consecrated to His praise and glory; and all ending in everlasting ruin and shame. Nor does He weep as the unconcerned spectator of a tragedy might weep, but as a mother over the child of her travail and tears and hopes; as David over Absalom; rather,

as God over His creature, as the Redeemer over the ransomed soul, for there is no tie so tender or in any way comparable. If the rivers of the nether world are fed with the gathered tears of time, where is the ocean which receives the tears of eternity shed over the everlasting ruins of Love's dearest designs; over souls whom God had set upon a hill to be witnesses to His name amidst idolaters and pagans; whom He had called to help others and make known his Name and Nature and Truth, but "they would not"?

"Her foundations are upon the hills of holiness. The Lord loveth the gates of Sion beyond all the dwellings of Israel. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O thou City of God!" thou city of David and of the Prophets, who have loved thee as a bride and wept for thee and prayed for thee: who have given God no rest day and night that He might make thee a joy to the whole earth: *Civitas perfecti decoris, gaudium universæ terræ.* And yet this "child of many tears" must perish by her own wilful, persevering resistance, victorious over a thousand graces. In the history of Jerusalem we see the history of every fallen soul—fallen a thousand times and raised as often, and only cast off in the extreme where further grace would violate free choice. We have to kick and struggle hard and long before God's patience is exhausted, and He sets us down from His arms to run our own way to destruction.

"Hadst thou but known the things of thy peace." In these days we deny that men are

responsible for their beliefs and unbeliefs; that there is such a thing as wilful blindness of heart; wilful stupidity. If one acts according to his light we ask no more, forgetting that he may be shutting his eyes to the light. Yet our Lord's teaching is only that of daily experience and common sense. The affections are the eye-lids and motor-muscles of the intellect or spiritual eye; opening or closing it, turning it towards one point and away from another. Our imagination, passions, emotions, are far less under our free control than our judgments and opinions. Any one who knows the world knows that the cleverest reasons count for nothing with those who are indisposed to accept the conclusions. They will be either ignored or distorted. Where our treasure is, there will our heart and mind be. A millionaire is in theory anti-socialist; an underpaid labourer is a socialist; each accepts the theory that best secures him his treasure. Israel was ever blinded by dreams of wealth and ambition, and secular power and glory—a carnal-minded, hard-hearted, stiff-necked people; their treasure was not in God and in His truth, and when He came "He had no form or comeliness" for them; and when they saw Him they saw naught about Him that they should desire Him.

And the punishment is a natural consequence, namely, the inability to use the faculty which we pervert or leave unexercised; the eye is dimmed, the ear dulled, the conscience seared, the heart petrified. *Nesciunt quid faciunt*—We know not what we are doing, and God is crucified in our wilful

ignorance; we rush self-blinded into crime upon crime. It is the worst of God's punishments when He leaves us alone to run our own course, till the things that belong to our peace are hidden from our eyes; till from obscurity and confusion of mind we come to a strong conviction and settled belief in a lie.

CCLXV.

THE ETERNAL YEARS.

Antiquus dierum.

"The Ancient of Days." There is sometimes a strange beauty of expression in those who have lived much, seen much, thought much, and suffered much, and who have "kept themselves unspotted from the world." Pondering their own experiences and the recorded experiences of others in their heart, they have by sympathy borne the sorrow and tasted the joys of the whole race, and the record, not of a single life, but of ages, is written on their features. When St. John beheld the beauty of the Ancient of Days, of Alpha and Omega, for whom there is no yesterday nor to-morrow, but only an ever-present "now;" before whose eyes all time is spread out with its colours, lights, and shadows; whose spotless Heart has answered every throb of every heart created; he "fell at His feet as one dead."

CCLXVI.

MID-LIFE.

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura.

"In the midway of this our mortal life, I found me in a gloomy wood astray." It was at the point of mid-life, that the poet found himself involved in the deepest obscurity, mental and moral; tempted to despair of himself and of Church and State; to turn and flee back into the dark and pathless thicket; to abandon all hopes of the sun-clad heights. It takes half our life to make us realize and acquiesce in the truth, that this world is designed to disappoint, to raise our aspirations higher and higher, yet never to satisfy them; that in disappointing us and making us turn elsewhere, it fulfils its design most admirably. We have to descend from the *selva oscura*—the gloomy wood, to the very depths of Hell, before we can again behold the stars; or dispose ourselves to ascend to them, or subject ourselves to the Love that moves them. This crisis of life is a dangerous time to those who do not understand it, or have not some Lucy or Beatrice or Virgil interested in their guidance. One stands tottering on the narrow ledge that divides the deepest faith and hope and love, from the deepest agnosticism, pessimism, cynicism. Prior to this our inner life is but embryonic, formative, and uterine. Now it is that we are brought to the birth; either to begin to live, or to be strangled in

the process; either *à rivider le stelle*, or *à rovinare in basso loco;* to see the stars once more; or to plunge back into the dark wood.

CCLXVII.

THE FEET OF CHRIST.

Ex quo intravit, non cessavit osculari pedes meos.

"Since her entrance, she has not ceased to kiss My feet." Taking the feet of Christ as the lowest, most earthly, least heavenly members of His Mystic Body, Mary Magdalene teaches us in symbol our conduct as penitents towards penitents. Our Saviour had washed her from her sins in His Blood; she in return washes His earth-soiled members with her tears. For her, He had laid aside His glory and sacrificed all; and she devotes to their service the best He had given her, the beauty and the wealth that had been till then devoted to sin and selfishness; she dries them with her hair, and anoints them with her precious spikenard. He runs to meet the penitent, yet a long way off, and receives her with the kiss of peace as most dear to Him; and she ministers to His feet not merely with a relative affection—loving them only for His sake, not seeing in them the lovableness which He sees—but with a direct personal love, and with the kisses of passionate devotion. He anoints her with the unction of sanctifying grace—very precious; bought at the price of God's blood-shedding—and heals the wounds of her soul, and makes her all fragrant with the oil of gladness; and she, after she has cleansed

the soil from His feet with her tears; after the old life has been obliterated, superinfuses that *spiritualis unctio* the new and eternal life of grace, by whose fragrance God is ravished and drawn to the soul, as a bee to the flower, as it is written, *in odorem unguentorum tuorum currimus*. And many sins were forgiven her because of her much love to those same feet; for he that shall convert a sinner shall cover a multitude of sins; and what is done to the last and least of His brethren, to those who have least likeness to Him, is done to Him.

CCLXVIII.

LIFE FROM DEATH.

Expecto resurrectionem mortuorum et vitam venturi sæculi.

"I await the Resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come." Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen; and thus the last article of our creed in order of synthesis, is the first in order of analysis. It was this expectation of the future life, far more dimly apprehended than by us, the "looking for the reward," "for a city whose builder and founder is God," that nerved the old-world saints to subdue kingdoms, work righteousness and the rest;[1] to live as strangers and pilgrims on earth. Still more in the fuller light of Christian revelation have martyrs, virgins, confessors, reformers, labourers, sufferers, lifted up their eyes to the hills of eternity, those far-off mountains whose

[1] Hebrews xi.

peaks are bright with the coming day, and from whence come our help and our hope. In looking for the resurrection of our mortal dust, for the re-gathering and re-quickening of dry bones and scattered fragments, we are pushing the madness of hope to its extremity; of hope in lost causes, disappointed ideals, frustrated designs; of hope in Him who is the Resurrection and the Life and brought Lazarus from his grave. He who can say "I hope," or rather, "I wait, as for a distant but certain event, for the resurrection of the dead," can never despair, however dark and puzzling God's ways may seem to him.

CCLXIX.

HABITS.

Qui perseveraverit usque in finem, hic salvus erit.

"He that shall persevere to the end shall be saved." Though it is true that habits are formed and uprooted by the same process, namely, by a persevering repetition of acts; still if the habit be accordant to inclination it is quickly formed and very slowly uprooted. Contrariwise, if it be adverse to inclination, it is hard to form and easy to lose. In the forming of difficult habits and the uprooting of easy habits, perseverance does not mean infallibility and constancy, but is compatible with the absolutely certain prevision of many lapses and failures. It is the resolution to do one's best, and after each lapse to begin again with great faith in the psychological law by which the falls become

fewer and more wide apart, till at last the intervals are measured by years, or even by a life-time. The ignorance of this law is a source of great discouragement and settled despair. Men are simply astonished to find that they cannot change a habit by one strong resolution; and after two or three attempts, give up in bewilderment. Yet even on natural psychological principles it is not strange that it should take four or five years to eradicate all the germs of a disease contracted in a month or less.

CCLXX.

THE AGONY.

Non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu.

"Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." It is hard not to imagine that a neutralized force is extinct and non-existent, however great it may be. Perfect self-mastery may easily be interpreted as apathy; and the absolute submission of our Saviour's human will to His Divine will is conceived in effect as though that human will were paralyzed or wholly absent. God alone and our own heart knows the existence of many affections within us, which are kept in abeyance only by the continual pressure of counter-motives against which they strain as the seemingly inert water does against the sides of the containing vessel. There is in every finite spirit, and therefore in the human spirit of our Saviour, a fundamental self-regarding tendency, which is

given in order that it may be ruled by and serve a no less fundamental extra-regarding tendency—the impulse of reason and conscience and of that Divine love, which looks to the interests of universal order, to the common good, to the glory and Kingdom of God. Uncurbed by this latter, the self-assertive impulse is the source of sin and disorder; and when it is habitually rebellious it is a vice, a "law of sin" resisting the law of mind and reason. But when it is well and abundantly overmastered by the higher law and kept in its place, it is altogether good and useful; nor is its pressure against the curb to be accounted rebellion, since it is in conformity with the very nature of the finite will. For the finite spirit is not made to stand alone by itself; but to form part of one living organism in union with God, the "Father of spirits," and with all the "spirits of the just, made perfect." The part exists primarily for the whole, and for itself, only in order to the whole. Divine charity bids us love and long for God's Kingdom and glory in which our own salvation is included, far more than for our own salvation, considered exclusively as a mere fraction of that glory. If self-charity is a first duty, it means that our first duty towards the whole, that is, towards the Kingdom of God, is to perfect ourselves in our own particular place and function therein. For as each part is more perfect, so will the whole be; and our utility to others depends upon what we are in ourselves. But the ruling motive is always charity, the love of God's glory, of the common good, of the universal beatitude. The

fundamental self-regarding instinct is given, not to rule us, but to be ruled by us in the interests of reason and charity. It is a force put at our disposal; and the stronger it is, the greater our power for good or evil, according to the use we make of it. In our Saviour its force was in direct proportion to the love of His Sacred Heart. Never for a moment could it cause the grasp of reason and Divine love to tremble or relax. But in Lucifer and the fallen angels we see the havoc and destruction wrought by this force of individualism when it breaks from the restraint of the social law of love, hurling, so to say, the planet from its orbit to its own destruction, and to the dismemberment of the system to which it belonged. In His Agony, our Saviour teaches us that it is only at the cost of bitter self-conflict that we can enter into the life of love; that we must lose our isolated, selfish life before we can find it a hundred-fold by entering into the life of God and of our fellow-members in His Kingdom. For, indeed, if we are to enter into the joy of our Lord, that is, into that corporate rejoicing of God and His Elect, we must first enter into our Saviour's Agony, when, going out of Himself, He entered into every human soul and made all its sorrows and infirmities His own. There are times when we are tempted to shut out the thought of the evils and sufferings around us; to be a world in ourselves and for ourselves; for why should we harrow ourselves with ills past curing, or past our curing? Yet this suggestion is from the lower, self-regarding will. For the higher will, the will of reason and of God

working in our reason, tells us that we must live out of ourselves and in others; and therefore that it is our duty to suffer with others, and to feel the pain of our helplessness. God, at most, lifts some little corner of the veil which hides that awful vision of sin and sorrow from our eyes; but our Saviour, in His Passion, had to face it all, and to feel it all distinctly and in detail; and if a mother would shrink from gazing on the torn and mangled corpse of her only son, what must it have cost Him whose love for each soul surpasses indefinitely the united love of all mothers, to behold and drink in, all the miseries of the teeming millions of humanity? Hence He prays in an agony: "Not My will, but Thine." And if, on the one hand, we must not for a moment admit any moral disorder in this fearful straining of the lower against the higher will in our Saviour's spiritual soul, seeing that the higher was perfectly and infallibly master; yet, on the other, we must remember that His pain was in proportion to the intensity of the impact with which the lower will dashed itself fruitlessly against the untrembling rock of His love for us. For it is not he who yields to temptation, or even who is in danger of yielding, that suffers most, but he rather who holds out and endures.

CCLXXI.

SCOURGED FOR OUR INIQUITY.

Disciplina pacis nostræ super eum, et livore ejus sanati sumus; et posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum.

"The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and by His bruises we are healed, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." It is a necessary condition of our spiritual incorporation with others by nature, knowledge, and sympathy, that the chastisement of their crimes should often fall upon us who are innocent; and that the member which receives the stroke should not always be the member which merited it. A false individualism is scandalized by the doctrine of original sin, of the visiting of the sins of the fathers upon the children, of vicarious suffering and atonement. Certainly their quarrel is not only with the God of Christians, but with the Author of Nature. For there, too, the law is, that some labour and others enter into their labours; some sow, and others reap; and this alike for better or for worse. Reason, when more closely interrogated, sanctions our speaking of the "human family" as of a close community whereof no member suffers or rejoices, but the rest suffer or rejoice with

it. And if the force of the Christian and Catholic idea has broken many of the old bonds that held tribes and nations together, it has only been to replace them with more comprehensive and world-wide ties. It is not that the family or national tie is thought less of, but that the tie of Christian and human brotherhood is thought more of; not that father and mother are loved less, but that Christ and mankind are loved more; for "he that loves father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me." The more we enter into Christ's mind in this matter, the greater will be our share by way of sympathy in the sufferings of mankind; and the more reasonable will it seem to us that we should bear the chastisement of the sins of others. Everywhere, both in the natural and supernatural dispensations, in the necessary laws of society, and in the economy of original sin and vicarious atonement, we are taught that none lives for himself, none is self-sufficing, none without his burden; that each is his brother's keeper, and is to help him to bear his burden. If the world were not full of sorrow and sin; if it were a terrestrial paradise where each had all he needed, and depended on no one, how could men's hearts and minds have ever been knit together into one? Compassion, the divinest thing about us, would have lain dormant in the depths of our heart like a pearl buried in the ocean; whereas now it shines even in the darkest and most seemingly God-forsaken souls.

It is then in harmony with this conception of the solidarity of mankind that God should make

His sun to shine upon the evil and the good, that He should send His rain upon the just and the unjust; that wheat and tares should be treated in the present somewhat indiscriminately, with no fine sifting of personal merits; that none should be able to escape the consequences of the deeds of others—good and bad—or to prevent the fates of thousands being intertwined with his own. And if the innocent suffer for the guilty, the guilty, too, are spared and blest for the innocent. The just are the salt of the earth, for any ten of whom God would spare ten thousand sinners, for one saint glorifies God more than a thousand sinners dishonour Him. In fine, if we look forward to a share in the common or general joy of Christ and His saints, we must now share in the common or general sorrow, bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ, who was scourged for our transgressions.

CCLXXII.

ASCETICISM.

Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself." Needless to say that Christian as opposed to Manichean or dualistic asceticism, springs from the root of charity, or from the love of God's Kingdom and glory. Antagonistic to this spirit of universal love is the spirit of self-centred love: which is the spirit of disorder, false independence, and sin. Natural reason and conscience convey to us the will of God, who is subsistent Reason, whose interest and aim is universal good and right order; and they impel us to live for a whole whereof we are but parts, and for a good whereof our particular good is but a fraction. When enlightened by Catholic faith, the voice of conscience is none other than the voice of Christ, who lives in us and impels us to live for the Father's glory, and to find our greatest good in the final "joy of our Lord" and of His Mystical Body. "I live," says St. Paul, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And it is only so far as the selfish life wanes, that the soul can become the instrument of that higher and more universal life. If we are to live to Christ, we must die to self; if we are to assert Him and His truth in our conduct, we must deny self, and all the lying principles of selfishness and individualism. Christian mortification and asceticism aims at the suppression of self-assertion, both bodily and spiritual, not

merely when it is in actual conflict with the law of reason, order, and charity, but at all times, in order to secure the habitual disposition and the ready obedience of the flesh to the spirit, *i.e.*, of blind nature to reason and to God. No social reforms, no laws or systems, will remedy the present evils of civilization until the doctrine of the Cross and the duty of self-denial and mortification have been accepted by all classes. All our miseries are traceable to the spirit of selfish individualism which unbelief has canonized, and with which even believers are impregnated, so that the Church herself is well-nigh paralyzed—*omnes quæ sua sunt quærunt; non quæ Jesu Christi*—all seek their own advantage or praise, and not the interests of Jesus Christ.

CCLXXIII

THE MASS.

Desiderio desideravi.

"I have greatly longed to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer." Every single Mass is nothing more nor less than a renewal of that great paroxysm of our Saviour's passionate love for the soul; another outbreak of the anguish which says *desiderio desideravi*. When shall we understand this or believe it? "He that loves," says à Kempis, "knows the strong cry of the lover." Let us, if we have ever loved child or mother or friend or spouse, try and recall the "hunger and thirst," the craving for nearness and converse which love means, its restlessness and burning energy. And let us add to all this whatever

we have read or heard of ardent, devoted passion. And let us cast all these longings into one love which holds in solution all that is best in each of them; and let us multiply its fervour seven times, and that, seven times again, till our head reels before the prospect of infinity stretching away beyond our utmost horizon; and then let us bring this infinite force of love and compress it into the finite compass of a human heart, bursting and breaking out under the strain on every side; and perhaps we shall have some dim notion of what goes on when day by day He comes hungering and thirsting for our love and breaks bread and says, "Take and eat, this is My Body which is given for you." Take all that I have, all that I am, make Me yours, dispose of Me according to your good will and pleasure; do with Me what you like. I am your slave, at your mercy to use or abuse; crushed and humbled by hunger, ready for the very husks of the swine, the scraps and leavings of your love. Love I must have or perish. Give Me any sort of love and this is enough for Me, though I would fain have more. This is My Body that I gave to be torn to shreds *for you*, and would give a thousand times a day if necessary to be crucified again *for you*, the Body that I took *for you*, in hopes I might get you to love Me. And this is My Blood, My Heart's Blood that I poured out for you and for all your sins that they might not come between us; the blood of the new and eternal covenant of love and friendship; of the contract between the soul and its Divine lover and spouse; *new* because it is ever

strange and incredible to narrow hearts and dim eyes; *eternal* because it is from the beginning as old as God Himself, as old as the embrace of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; before the morning stars were created and the sons of God shouted for joy—*ex utero ante luciferum*. The "mystery of faith," for it is not the "how" of transubstantiation that will scandalize any mind of mediocre modesty; but the mystery of the Divine indigence and dependence; how the self-sufficing can be famishing with want; parched and athirst with the fever of love—and love of what? Of Himself, after all; and yet not a selfish love, for it is the source of all pure and unselfish love. All right and orderly love is but some mode or manifestation of that impulse whereby God having in some sense gone out of Himself, returns to Himself; whereby the sparks are drawn back to the fire; and the rain-drops to the ocean; and the many, to the parent "One;" and "the soul to God that gave it." "I speak as a man," not as though God were frangible, in any such literal sense, but because these things, so far as they are helpful and beautiful, are less and not more than the truth. Wherever He finds Himself in His substance or in His image there He loves Himself with the force of His infinite love, and draws to Himself what is of Himself and yet not Himself. It is this love, this drawing, which manifests itself in every appetite and longing, natural or superinduced, and which is the perverted body and substance even of every sinful desire. In some sort it may be conceived as if in the created

universe God the Head had fashioned unto Himself a body of which He is the animating breath, the life and the love; moving every sense and member to His own end, wherein each singly finds its rest and final satisfaction. It is not my hand that serves me, but I who by my hand serve my self; nor does the foot serve the hand; but I, through the foot serve the hand for my self's sake, of which self the hand is part. Again, this is but the rude figure of human speech, failing of the truth, painting the pure, living light of the sun with dead chalkings called white only because there is something blacker. It is not I who love God, but God who loves Himself through me; it is not my brother who loves me, but God who loves me through him; and loves Himself in me. And so the need God has of my love is the manifestation of the need He has of Himself, that absolute, all-forcing necessity; whereof all finite loves are faint shadowings. And if I but knew the meaning of my spiritual instincts, if I could but see the term they are groping at, as He sees it who implanted them, I should see that my love, however weak and feeble in degree, has for its only satisfying object the All-good, the All-beautiful, the All-true; God and all that is God's, with God and under God, each in due place and order. This is indeed the *Mysterium Fidei*, the incredible mystery of God's passion for the immortal soul; that passion which breaks out into wild conflagrations and extravagant paroxysms day by day while we kneel by, hard and cold, and hear words and see bread and wine, and

half-believe, and half-wonder what it all means, as new-born babes opening their eyes strangely on the world which is one day to be all to them, but which as yet is nothing. *Desiderio desideravi;* if we have no desire ourselves, let us at least not stand in the way of His.

"He loved them even unto the end." The Eucharist was pre-eminently a leave-taking, a parting gift of our Saviour to His friends. It was also a parting lesson in the New Law; a parting injunction of the Great Precept, renewed day by day in the Mass. Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. "Behold I have given you an example," He says, "the Good Shepherd giveth His life for His sheep. Feed My sheep. Do to one another as I have done to you." This is the archetype of that self-giving love of others, which so far as it can or may, says to the least of Christ's brethren: Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you; this is my blood which is shed for you; this is my life, my health, my best energy, my heart, my love which is devoted and given over to you. *In hoc cognovimus caritatem Dei, quoniam ille pro nobis animam posuit, et nos debemus pro fratribus animas ponere.* Herein have we known the love of God, since He laid down His life for us; and we also ought to lay down our lives for our brethren.

THE END.

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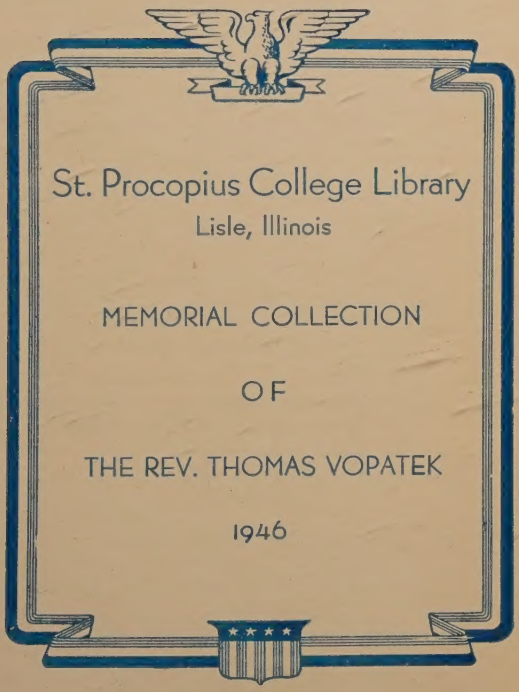
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